

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP FOR
SELECTED CHURCHES OF NORTHUMBERLAND PRESBYTERY**

A THESIS

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BY

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To my wife Pauline
daughter Libby
and son Drew,
thanks for your constant encouragement.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND SETTING.....	1
CHAPTER 2: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.....	15
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	37
CHAPTER 4: INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATING PASTORS	58
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS...	101
APPENDIX A	111
APPENDIX B	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	121
VITA.....	124

ABSTRACT

There is a great deal of talk about leadership. There is also a great need for pastoral leadership; this need seems to be increasing. This author, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of what is needed to lead the church within the presbytery he serves, set out to study the pastoral and leadership styles of five colleagues within the presbytery.

This author solicited from each participant the Biblical role models, the literature, and the people that have most greatly influenced them as a pastoral leader.

The goal was to find some patterns and common experiences that lead to successful and lengthy pastorates in Presbyterian congregations in Central Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND SETTING

The pastor is generally identified as the leader of the congregation, yet are most pastors leaders? Churches hire pastors, but are they hiring leaders? This author is seeking to determine what leadership factors are present and what leadership factors are missing within the churches studied. How do the current pastoral leadership and the pastor's perceived effectiveness contribute to the health of the congregations studied? Additional leadership factors might be the legacy of historical leadership, current lay leadership, and the utilization of leadership resources.

The Problem

The presbytery where the author serves is dying a gradual steady death, and few seem to express care or to be doing anything about it. The presbytery simply keeps doing the same things over and over again. The presbytery is aware that the membership and worship attendance numbers are dwindling. At the March 2008 meeting of the Presbytery, in the midst of the Executive Presbyter's report, it was stated that, "The presbytery has been in decline for 43 years."¹ The statistical report for the presbytery, which is issued annually at the March meeting of the presbytery shows declines in both the number of active members and of average Sunday morning worship attendance; both indicators of church vitality. In 2004 the combined total active membership of the 45 congregations that make up the presbytery was 5,621, in 2005 that number had declined to 5,459, in 2006 the total was 5,374, and in 2007 the total was down to 5,340. That is a decline of 281 active members. The decline in total weekly average worship attendance

¹ Executive Presbyter's report stated meeting of Northumberland Presbytery, March 15, 2008.

for the presbytery is even greater. From 2004 to 2005 it went from 2,875 to 2,795.² In 2006 the total average worship attendance did increase to 2,857, but was down to 2,513 for 2007.³ The decrease from 2006 to 2007 of 344 is greater than the average Sunday morning worship attendance for the largest congregation in the presbytery.⁴ It seems as if everyone is looking to others to take the lead in addressing the problem and working on a change that will reverse the declines.

The Executive Presbyter (EP) exhorts spiritual renewal and church growth. He is a good cheerleader, but cheerleaders rarely affect the outcome of what they are cheering for. In Northumberland presbytery the position of EP does not contain the authority to be a significant agent of change. He is busy dealing with day-to-day duties and the occasional crisis. Although he is very much aware of the decline in both the number of active members and the average worship attendance of the congregations within presbytery, he seems unable to do anything significant about it other than heightening people's awareness of the situation.

There is a "Taskforce Concerning the Future" of the presbytery. From the name it would seem that the taskforce would be addressing the issues of the declining membership and worship attendance, but it is not, at least not directly. The taskforce's focus is on the structure of the presbytery: committees, presbytery meetings, and long-term finances. The taskforce is not specifically focused on local congregations and their vitality, or lack thereof. They are seeking to adjust to the decline of resources, both human and financial, rather than reverse the decline.

² Northumberland Presbytery. *Annual Statistical Report for 2005*, (Williamsport, PA: March 18, 2006), 16.

³ William Knudsen, *Executive Presbyter's Report*, (Wellsboro, PA: March 15, 2008).

⁴ Northumberland Presbytery. *Annual Statistical Report for 2007*, (Wellsboro, PA: March 15, 2008), 9.

There are no committees, subcommittees, or task forces specifically addressing the trend of diminishing congregations. One elder of the church that this author serves was on the Committee on Ministry (COM) for six years. The declining membership within the presbytery was and is of great concern to him. He concluded his term on the COM in December of 2006; in November of 2007 he asked a current committee member what they are doing about the decline. “No one has brought it up since you went off the committee.”⁵

The Setting

The Presbytery of Northumberland is a middle governing body made up of 45 Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations in North Central Pennsylvania. The area that makes up the presbytery is geographically large. It is made up of one small city, Williamsport (population 30,706 in the 2000 census)⁶ at the geographical center of the presbytery, and many small towns and rural areas in every direction. Williamsport’s glory days were 100 years ago when it was a logging town. It hasn’t thrived since, but it has survived without significant economic improvement in years. The small towns and rural communities that make up the rest of the presbytery are primarily agricultural and manufacturing communities. There are seven colleges (four small state universities, two midsize private universities, and one small regional college) within the presbytery. There are two federal prisons in the area. These colleges and prisons bring significant economic benefits to their communities and a level of economic stability to the greater area. They also bring a steady influx of people, which contributes to the area. The region

⁵ Told by Elder J. William Moore, on November 19, 2007.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau; State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/4285312.html> (accessed January 15, 2008).

that makes up the presbytery experiences a variety of economic ebbs and flows, but in general is fairly stable, with a fairly stable population.⁷

Even with a stable economy and a stable population, the vast majority of congregations within the presbytery are experiencing significant decline and have been for some time. The trend is that the presbytery is losing 58 worshipers annually. (see Appendix A) This is nearly the size of the Sunday morning worship attendance for an average congregation in Northumberland Presbytery. (see Appendix A) One would expect that the presentation of these numbers and trends would lead to an active response, some outcry, and the asking of hard questions about what needs to be done. On the floor of the presbytery meetings there is no such response. The report is generally met with silence. Occasionally someone will attribute decline to a decline in the local general population, but that is simply not the case.⁸

There were 45 congregations in Northumberland Presbytery; in March 2007 the presbytery took action to begin the process to close one congregation.⁹ As the presbytery went through the actions there was an atmosphere of sorrow, yet there was no explanation of how this congregation reached a point that it couldn't even pay the utility bills. There was no reporting of the attempts that had been made to revive the church, simply that it was time to close the church and begin the process of selling the property. The moderator of their Board of Elders (Session), an ordained pastor with a fulltime secular job, expressed his sorrow after moderating the session for over 15 years. Nobody

⁷U.S. Census Bureau; State and County QuickFacts for Cameron, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Tioga, and Union counties.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau; State and County QuickFacts for Cameron, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Tioga, and Union counties.

⁹ Minutes of the 569 Stated Meeting, Northumberland Presbytery, March 17, 2007.

asked any questions, it was just a matter of fact that it was time to close this congregation.

This author believes one of the primary issues is leadership, or rather a lack of leadership. George Barna states, “I’ve interviewed hundreds of people who have devoted themselves to trying to lead people, only to discover that they are unsuccessful and frustrated in their efforts.” Barna goes on to conclude that “the individual decided to be a leader even though God did not call him or her to be one.”¹⁰ There are good hearted, loving, caring people in pastorates and positions of leadership within the presbytery, but are they leaders? Are they gifted, experienced, and capable leaders? Who is asking the hard questions about the state of the church?¹¹ There are a handful of people that have expressed their concern over the declining health of many of the churches in the presbytery and that are asking hard questions. These people tend to be from the congregations that are strong and growing. They are concerned about their neighbors. The response to the hard questions is silence, and there seems to be no response from within or from outside of struggling congregations to the anemic condition of so many congregations within the presbytery.

Although the presbytery is small in number, and the congregations within the presbytery tend to be relatively small, this author believes this presbytery is reflective of trends that are taking place within most mainline denominations. There are a few congregations that are thriving, but most are struggling and have been for some time. This trend can be seen in their membership roles, worship attendance and annual budgets,

¹⁰ George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 61.

¹¹ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming A Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 14.

which are tracked on the denomination's web site.¹² The author does not see congregations or presbyteries demanding strong pastoral leadership, the cultivation of pastoral leadership, or the issue even being addressed as a significant factor for congregations within the presbytery.

Candidates for pastoral positions within the presbytery are examined on the floor of a presbytery meeting. This examination is essentially just a formality; the congregation has met the candidate and is excited about "having a new pastor." The examination by the presbytery is to focus on the candidate's statement of faith, but other questions are welcome. There are generally no questions regarding leadership; leadership experience, past successes in leadership, the strongest aspects of one's leadership abilities, goals for the church they are coming to, and how they expect to reach those goals. Perhaps search committees are asking questions of this nature. Maybe the Committee on Ministry is asking questions about leadership, though none were asked of the author when he met with them. The questions on leadership are not being asked when a candidate comes before the presbytery.

This is in great contrast to the author's congregation. The author serves a congregation that is growing and filled with energy and enthusiasm. There is a legacy of strong pastoral leadership that goes back three generations. There are lay leaders that ask hard questions. There is a high level of pastoral accountability to the leadership. Sometimes this is intimidating; sometimes this is exasperating; usually it is motivating and encouraging.

¹² General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report. www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends (accessed January 15, 2008).

This thesis is not about the author's congregation. Rather it is a study of the pastoral leadership of some neighboring congregations; some of them are doing well, some are struggling with gradual decline. Each of the congregations is seen as a strong congregation within the presbytery, with strong pastoral leadership. What are the pastoral leadership experiences and expectations at these selected churches within Northumberland Presbytery? Is pastoral leadership, past and present, a significant factor in the vitality of these congregations? What expectations of pastoral leadership and accountability to the elders are present? Are there patterns in the pastoral leadership that may indicate why a church is thriving or struggling? Locally have these patterns been identified and addressed, positively or negatively?

For this thesis the critical issue is pastoral leadership: Are the pastors participating in this project leaders? Do they see themselves as gifted in leadership? Experienced in leadership? Called to lead? Empowered to lead and expected to lead? Have their leadership abilities been nurtured and cultivated. The author believes that the presbytery could benefit from understanding the leadership strengths and weaknesses of these five pastors and their leadership dynamics within the congregation they pastor. There is no doubt that these pastors are in ministry because they each love the Lord and desire to serve God, but are they effective leaders? This author believes all the participants are leaders; how they lead and the effectiveness of their leadership is the focus of this project. This author believes there is a direct correlation between the vitality of a congregation and their pastor's ability and call to lead. The presbytery could benefit from better understanding this correlation.

Biblically, especially in the Old Testament, the strength and faithfulness of the identified leader was a reflection of the people's faithfulness to God. There are significant exceptions to this pattern, Moses being the clearest example of this. In the New Testament the specifics of individual leaders seems to become less significant, and the character attributes seems to become more significant. This is seen primarily in Paul's writings to Timothy and Titus. Jesus' teachings to the Disciples are more directed at evangelism than at leading a body of believers. His words for the established religious leaders of the day were consistently critical (Matt 23). Though within the Presbyterian church the pastors do not have the same authority within the culture or community as the religious leaders of Jesus' day had, His very strong words directed at religious leaders still apply. Jesus' strong words to religious leaders and the Reformation may cause Presbyterian pastors and the denomination to seek to minimize the leadership role of the pastor.

The hypothesis is that pastoral leadership is a more significant determining factor in the vitality of a congregation than is acknowledged within the presbytery. Past leadership also has an effect on the current vitality and leadership of a church. A church's current struggles are reflective of patterns of ineffective leadership in the past and present. Current vitality within a church is reflective of established healthy patterns of leadership and the current leadership.

There seems to be a high level of complacency among the current leadership of most churches within the presbytery; they seem to be more concerned with maintaining what they have than on growing. This author will seek to determine if this is accurate among the current leadership, both lay and clergy, of the churches to be studied. Or

whether there is something else affecting their ability to grow and thrive. How do the clergy demonstrate effective leadership? Are the lay leaders holding the clergy accountable for effective leadership and ineffective leadership within the life of the church?

Accountability is one aspect of lay leadership; caring and support are also critical aspects of lay leadership. Are the aspects of accountability, caring, and support being exercised in equal measure? Do the pastors feel supported by the lay leadership?

Does the session see their role as one of holding the pastor accountable? Do they function as a board of directors; analyzing goals and objectives? Are they active in oversight, but passive in involvement? Do they see themselves as those who are to make sure that the pastor is doing the job?

When it comes to preaching, what feedback do the elders give on the sermons? Is there clear regular feedback? Are they pleased with the Biblical content? How do they feel about their pastor's preaching style? Do they find their pastor's sermons interesting, relevant, and applicable?

Do the elders see their role as providing care and support? Do they express warmth and encouragement? Are they complimentary? Are they participatory? Do they see themselves as one's who cheer the pastor on, or do they see themselves as partners in ministry working alongside the pastor?

This author wants to know about the elders' prayer for their pastor, and the pastor's prayer for the elders. Are they committed in their praying for one another? Do they gather regularly just for prayer? The author would like to know how pastors and sessions are praying for one another, and with one another for the church they lead.

There are a number of dynamics in leadership that affect the vitality of a church: how pastors are gifted and experienced in leadership, how they see themselves as leaders, how the session perceives their pastor as leader, and how the session perceives their role in leadership. Are there consistent patterns of these dynamics that affect the vitality of a church? This author will interview the five selected pastors separately in an attempt to discover their leadership strengths and weaknesses, and discern any leadership patterns. The information regarding trends in leadership would be available to assist the presbytery in determining leadership needs that may be present in other congregations within the presbytery.

Literature on leadership is its own industry. Amazon lists 277,777 books addressing leadership.¹³ Christian Book Distributors lists 1,895.¹⁴ Although internet search engines do produce multiple hits of the same item within a particular search the evidence is clear, there is an abundance of resources on leadership. This author will focus on literature that deals most directly with the topic of the influence of pastoral leadership on the local congregation, books by best selling authors on pastoral leadership, and books that the selected pastors for this project have found influential.

In addition to the literature that the pastors have found helpful, what leadership materials have they found useful? Again, there is no shortage of available leadership materials to be used within the congregation. Are the churches utilizing the leadership resources available to them? Who is using these materials? Are thriving churches utilizing leadership materials? Are struggling churches using leadership materials? What

¹³ Search of books available on Amazon's website with the keyword "leadership." www.amazon.com (accessed on January 22, 2008).

¹⁴ Search of books available on Christian Book Distributor's website keyword "leadership." www.christianbooks.com (accessed on January 22, 2008).

is the perceived effectiveness of such materials? The pastors and elders will be asked for their perception of the use and effectiveness of leadership materials. Will their answers be the same or different?

The ministry relevance of this thesis is that this author is the pastor of one of the few congregations within the Northumberland Presbytery that is thriving. This author and the congregation he serves are only occasionally being asked to give from their abundance of resources to those congregations that are struggling. Being asked what is being done that is growing the congregation in membership, worship attendance, and giving. Just as it seems that no one is asking why churches are struggling, no one seems to be asking why this author's church is flourishing? When this author is asked why things are going so well and what "their congregation" can do to grow and become vibrant they tend to be looking for a "magic bullet"; the one thing they need for their church to grow. This author believes it is more complex than a single element, but a key ingredient that seems to be undervalued is pastoral leadership. The selected pastors have different temperaments and styles of leadership, but are there points of commonality that lead to strengths in leadership as well as similarities that lead to weaknesses in leadership?

The goal of this thesis is to provide some answers for the presbytery regarding how pastoral leadership or the lack thereof effects congregations within the presbytery. This project will examine the pastoral leadership in 5 congregations. These congregations represent a diversity of pastoral leadership situations and styles. The communities are geographically diverse both in location and demographic.

The Congregations of the pastors to be studied

The Mountain Presbyterian Church is a small country church with 82 members. The church is located 5 miles from the closest town, it is surrounded by apple orchards. They have a Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP). On paper if any church should be struggling it should be this one, yet this congregation is thriving. What are the leadership dynamics that Bob Reich, the CLP, and the session bring to this congregation that not only sustain this congregation, but also have it growing?¹⁵

Northumberland Presbyterian Church is in a small town. It has been a steady church within the community and the presbytery for many years. This is probably because Dick Kellet has been the pastor for 45 years. What are the leadership dynamics that have a pastor staying at one church for his entire career? In recent years the church has increased in membership, but declined in worship attendance.¹⁶

Milton Presbyterian Church is in a working class town. The church has a very likable pastor, Steve Shirk. He has many good ideas and is well respected, but the church is in decline, slightly in membership, significantly in worship attendance and dramatically in giving.¹⁷ What are the leadership dynamics there? What are the expectations from the elders? How is the pastor responding to these expectations? What is their explanation for the decline in giving? What are their goals for reversing these trends?

¹⁵ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913B/> (accessed January 15, 2008).

¹⁶ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913X/> (accessed January 15, 2008).

¹⁷ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913N/> (accessed January 15, 2008).

The Montoursville Presbyterian Church is in a middle class community just east of Williamsport. It is one of the few growing churches within the presbytery.¹⁸ Their youthful energetic pastor, Ollie Wagner, receives much of the credit for this. Ollie moved on from this congregation in the midst of this project, the congregation has continued to do well, even in Ollie's absence. What is this congregation doing that is working and drawing people to their congregation? How instrumental is their pastor in their growth? How much is the lay leadership involved in the growth? How much of their current leadership is a result of the growth?

The Lycoming Centre Presbyterian Church is in Cogan Station, a small town just north of Williamsport. The pastor of the church is a dynamic, driven, energetic, and gifted pastor, Bill Younger. Yet their membership, worship attendance and giving have been relatively constant for the past 9 years.¹⁹ When the pastor first arrived everything increased significantly for two years. Then the membership, worship attendance, and giving returned to the levels they were prior to his arrival. Since then membership has increased very gradually, giving has fluctuated up and down, and attendance has declined slightly every year. What are the leadership dynamics of the pastor and the session? What are their goals? What do they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of their pastor, session, and congregation?

Within the presbytery these five congregations would be seen as some of the stronger, more vibrant congregations. Montoursville, Mountain, and Northumberland are growing. Though all five would be perceived as strong congregations two of the five are

¹⁸ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913Q/> (accessed January 15, 2008).

¹⁹ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913E/> (accessed January 15, 2008).

experiencing decline. Each of these five pastors is well established in his congregation and well respected within the presbytery. Looking in the area of pastoral leadership, what are the commonalities? What are the differences? How does the lay leadership of these congregations perceive pastoral leadership as a factor in their past, present, and future? What can the presbytery learn from the leadership in these five pastors?

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

God is our ultimate leader and good biblical leadership should be reflective of the character and attributes of God. This author has chosen only to look at the attributes of Biblical leadership rather than any structures that might contribute to or interfere with the ability to lead. In the Bible leaders functioned in a wide variety of structures. As Douglas Whallon concluded, “Within certain limits, the New Testament provides many insights into leadership and some into structure. However, I am increasingly convinced that the New Testament does not establish one, final, uniform pattern of church government that is to serve as a norm for all ages.”¹ In Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus he defines the qualifications for church leadership. These lists are very similar; above reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, able to manage his family well, not a recent convert, and respected in the greater community (1Tim 3:2-10, Titus 1:7-9). Through the centuries the church has used these attributes as the standard for church leadership, but are these the exhaustive or the minimum requirements? Are there further attributes for leadership that are found in the great leaders within the Bible?

There are many leaders in the Bible. In the narrative portions of the Bible the emergence of leaders is prominent; too prominent to identify every leader, or address every grouping of leaders. The selection of biblical leaders chosen for study in this chapter is neither comprehensive nor systematic, but a sampling. The purpose of this

¹ Douglas E. Whallon, “Fanning the Leadership Flame: Developing Christian Leaders among Today’s College Students”, (D.Min. project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 1991), 33.

chapter is to look at some leaders from the Bible and identify attributes that contributed to their leadership, and attributes that inhibited their ability to lead.

The first biblical attribute of leadership is being called to lead. One may have the other attributes that make up a good leader, but if they are not called to lead then biblically they should not lead. All the biblical characters that will be studied in this chapter were called to lead. They were called through visions, dreams, or some other form of encounter with God. This project will look at how the participants were called to lead. The other attributes of leadership that the author has identified and are illustrated in scripture are (in no particular order or weighting) faithfulness, loyalty, humility, courage, perseverance, trustworthiness, obedience, generosity, tenacity, endurance, patience, continued growth, a commitment to the best interest of others, and the abilities to administrate, delegate, and mentor. This project will look for these attributes in the pastors participating in this project

Abraham was the father of the people of Israel, and he received great blessings from God. In his prosperity he certainly had a significant number of servants that he led on his journey. Though the biblical focus on Abraham is not specifically on his leadership, there are some characteristics of good leadership that Abraham exhibited. Scripture focuses on Abraham's obedience to God and his faithfulness in following the instructions of God.

Abraham's faithfulness and obedience were both tested and grown through the course of his life. When God said, "Go", Abraham went (Gen 12:1-9, NIV). When God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation, Abraham believed (Gen 15:6). As Joyce Baldwin says, "But Abram was convinced in the depth of his being that

the Lord was true, and His word valid.”² He did try to manipulate matters to bring forth God’s promises, but he learned that God is faithful and will fulfill His promises (Gen 16). Over the years, through trial and error, Abraham learned that God would keep His promises in His timeframe and in His way. God did not want Abraham trying to create a plan to fulfill God’s promises. Abraham learned to trust God in all aspects.

Abraham allowed his nephew, Lot, the choice of which land to settle in (Gen 13). Lot chose the more fertile land. Lot was not the only one that was attracted to the more fertile land, there was a war over the land, and Lot was taken captive. Abraham then rescued Lot from his captors (Gen 14). Abraham showed courage to lead in battle. He also showed a commitment to his nephew even though his nephew had made a selfish, and in hindsight, foolish decision. Commitment to the best interest of others and their well being is a positive characteristic of leadership. Abraham had an encounter with Melchizedek, a mysterious priest of God Most High (Gen 14:18-20). Abraham gave him a tenth of all he had recovered. Abraham showed humility and generosity in giving a tenth of his wealth to Melchizedek, the mysterious priest of the God Most High.³

In Genesis 22 Abraham was commanded by God to go on a journey and at the end of his journey he was to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham was faithfully obedient. When Isaac asked questions concerning the sacrifice, Abraham’s response was simply, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son” (Gen 22:8). Abraham was obedient to God to the point of binding Isaac and placing him on the altar. At the last moment God did provide a ram as a substitute for Isaac (Gen 22:12-13).

² Joyce G Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 47-48.

³ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 47-48.

Abraham learned how to be obedient and faithful to God. The errors he made were huge, but he learned. Through the many years he learned patience. Through the fulfillment of seemingly impossible promises he learned to trust to the point of total reliance in God.

The Biblical account of the life of Isaac, Abraham's son, describes a life that was relatively passive. Isaac seemed to let things come to him, he tended to react rather than act. There is much evidence that Isaac was not a leader. His father's servant traveled to find his bride. When Isaac and Rebekah had twin fraternal sons scripture is very clear that Isaac preferred Esau and Rebekah preferred Jacob (Gen 25:28).⁴ This is curious since God chose to fulfill His covenant with Abraham through Jacob and not Isaac's favored Esau. Isaac was obedient to God's instruction when commanded not to go to Egypt during a famine as his father had done. This was the only direct command from God to Isaac, and he was obedient. During this time Isaac responded to a situation in a way that he had learned from his father. He attempted to pass off his wife as his sister. His motivation for such a maneuver, like his father, was fear for his own safety. Scripture does not indicate any negative ramifications to this lack of faith in God's protective hand (Gen 26). This maneuver, though learned from his father, was not the move of a strong leader, without God's protective hand the deception could have had horrific consequences for Rebekah. From today's perspective Isaac's action was barbaric.

The overall image of Isaac is of a man that was manipulated by his wife in her efforts to favor their son Jacob over their other son Esau. Genesis 27 tells the story of Rebekah orchestrating Jacob's deception of Isaac to receive Isaac's blessing that was meant for Esau. Baldwin points out that Isaac unsuccessfully sought to keep his blessing

⁴ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 106.

of Esau secret from Rebekah, and this story was evidence that they had lost their love for one another.⁵ The deception was successful, but caused Jacob to flee from his brother. The story portrays Isaac as a fragile old man who was easily deceived by his wife and son. Isaac was not a good leader even though God is identified as “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” From the perspective of faithfulness to God and a patriarch leading the family that will become the nation of Israel, it is as if Isaac was simply the dash between Abraham and Jacob. Scripture does not give much evidence that Isaac was a leader. There is no significant evidence of faith, courage, or growth.

Jacob is the great patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel, and therefore must be considered a successful leader, yet his leadership could be described more as a “how not to” rather than a “how to.” Early in his life Jacob was a manipulator; stealing his brother’s birthright (Gen 25:29-34), then deceiving his father and receiving the blessing meant for his brother (Gen 27:1-40). The result of the deception was that Jacob had to flee from his brother (Gen 27:43). He headed to his Uncle Laban for refuge. Jacob was not “promising material for becoming an heir to the covenant promises.”⁶

On the way to Laban’s, while still in the Promised Land, Jacob had a dream. God spoke to Jacob and reaffirmed the promise He made with Jacob’s grandfather. God promised to return Jacob to the land where he was born and to give him countless descendants that will spread all over the world even though Jacob, like Abraham, at that time had no children (Gen 28:10-15).⁷ One of the vital ingredients of leadership is vision. God revealed His vision directly to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It seems to have

⁵ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 114.

⁶ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 106.

⁷ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 118.

made a significant impact on Abraham and Jacob, more than it did on Isaac. Abraham and Jacob knew God was with them.⁸

Jacob, like Abraham, seemed to have grown in his faithfulness to God, his belief in God's promise, and ultimately his ability to lead. This growth seemed to have taken place while Jacob was working for Laban. Jacob's relationship with Laban was filled with deceit. Initially Laban deceived Jacob into marrying Leah (Gen 29:15-27). Laban continually manipulated the terms of Jacob's employment. Laban always had the upper hand on Jacob. Ultimately Jacob fled from Laban causing a rather tense scene with some very hostile feelings (Gen 31). By the time Jacob leaves Laban he is a very different person from the man who fled from his brother (Gen 29-33).

Evident leadership traits that were developed in Jacob were humility and perseverance. Jacob showed humility when he prepared to return home and be reunited with his brother. His generous gift for his brother and his instructions given to the lead servants for when they met Esau reveal a humility that was not evident the last time he saw his brother (Gen 32:13-21, 33:3).⁹ Tenacity, endurance, patience, and perseverance are not terms one would associate with the early part of Jacob's life. Working for Laban, as difficult as that must have been for Jacob, may have been the catalyst God used to grow these attributes in Jacob. The mysterious night of wrestling with God, revealed a tenacity that was not apparent earlier in Jacob's life (Gen 32:22-32). Jacob is an example of someone who grew positive attributes for leadership through trials and tribulations. This author wonders how the trials and tribulations of the participants in this project shaped their leadership skills?

⁸ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 118.

⁹ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 140-141.

Joseph may have been the most successful leader in the Old Testament. Initially his vision of what God was going to do in his life was a stumbling block in his relationship with his brothers and even his father (Gen 37:5-11). His father's obvious favoritism of him also harmed Joseph's relationship with his brothers. This favoritism led to his being sold into slavery and taken off to Egypt. For most people being sold into slavery by your brothers and finding yourself going from favorite son to slave boy would be enough to any diminish anyone's leadership gifts, but not Joseph's.

Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, captain of the guard for the Pharaoh. Scripture seems to indicate that Joseph's ascendance to heading up Potiphar's house was rather rapid. God gave Joseph significant gifts for leadership: the gift of vision, a loyalty to those that entrusted him with responsibilities, the gift of administration. Joseph's gifts for leadership must have been fairly apparent, for everywhere Joseph went he quickly found himself in a role of significant leadership. After Potiphar's house it was prison for a couple of years, and ultimately, because of the special gifts God had given him, Joseph was put in charge of all of Egypt, accountable only to Pharaoh. Scripture is clear that this was because God had opened the eyes of those around Joseph to see and utilize the gifts and abilities God had given Joseph. It was remarkable that in the most sophisticated country of the time, a person of foreign birth who was brought into the country as a slave would be given the positions of responsibility that Joseph was (Gen 39-41).

Joseph's confidence/faith that God was the source of the dreams that foretold his future was what sustained him through all of his trials and tribulations. When he first shared his dreams with his father and brothers they were angered (Gen 37:5-11). The

dreams contributed to his brothers' hatred of him, which ultimately led to their selling him into slavery (Gen 37). Through his slavery and imprisonment Joseph must have held to the belief that someday what he saw, what God had revealed to him, in his dreams would come true. It was his ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams that led to Joseph's rise to be second only to Pharaoh in authority. As Joseph was explaining the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams of the seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of famine Joseph made it very clear that it was God who was revealing to Pharaoh the meaning of the dreams and therefore giving Pharaoh the ability to prepare Egypt for the famine (Gen 41).¹⁰ Through dreams God gave Joseph vision into what the future held for him. Vision is a significant element in Biblical leadership. The participants' perspective on vision is a point of emphasis of this project.

Joseph's loyalty was first seen when he served Potiphar. It must have taken time for Joseph to earn Potiphar's trust. Once that trust was gained Joseph honored Potiphar in the running of the household. Potiphar's wife took advantage of her husband's trust of Joseph in her attempt to seduce him. When the seduction failed it was Joseph that paid the price, imprisonment (Gen 39). Joseph again earned the trust of a person in authority, the warden. Scripture doesn't indicate how much Joseph's reputation preceded him and perhaps Potiphar even put in a good word for him. It does seem that Joseph was put in charge of the jail relatively quickly (Gen 39:20-23). Joseph's being placed in authority over all of Egypt came after more than two years of being imprisoned, but once he revealed to Pharaoh what God had in store for Egypt, Pharaoh placed Joseph in authority

¹⁰ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 174.

immediately. Joseph proved worthy of Pharaoh's trust, and was loyal to Pharaoh in organizing and carrying out the plan for the next 14 years (Gen 41, 47:13-26).¹¹

Joseph must have been greatly blessed with the gift of administration. This was evident in Potiphar's household and in the prison, but the 14-year plan for Egypt must have been a huge administrative endeavor. The fact that Scripture portrays Pharaoh's decision about putting Joseph in charge as being relatively spontaneous may be indicative that by the time Joseph explained Pharaoh's dreams Pharaoh had been briefed on Joseph's abilities. It would make sense for Potiphar, the Warden, and the Cupbearer to share with Pharaoh each of their experiences with Joseph and their appreciation for his abilities. Maybe Pharaoh had immediate insight into Joseph's abilities. Perhaps Pharaoh simply did not know of anyone else to turn to. Whatever the reasons for Pharaoh choosing Joseph to lead Egypt through this era, Scripture indicates it was the right decision. In the seven years of plenty Joseph prepared the nation for the famine. Through each of the seven years of famine Pharaoh benefited more and more (Gen 47:13-26). Joseph was a phenomenal administrator, being a good administrator is a characteristic of Biblical leadership.

Moses was a great leader. In a number of ways he was the first great leader of Israel. Though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the Patriarchs, their leadership, or lack of leadership, was contained to their family. Joseph was a great leader, with many Biblical gifts for leadership, but he was not a leader of God's chosen people Israel. He led the nation of Egypt through a crisis. Through this crisis he provided for his extended family, but he did not lead them. In the end he provided relief and comfort for his family, in the process he also caused them great strife (Gen 42-45).

¹¹ Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 175.

Moses was the first to lead the people of Israel, not just his extended family and not someone else's people. His leadership was faith-based leadership; he led the people because God told him to. Abraham took his family to the land God would show him. Moses' task was to take a huge people group, free them from slavery and lead them on a journey to the land God had promised to them through their common ancestor Abraham, a land they hadn't resided in for over 400 years.

Moses had the upbringing of a leader, an upbringing that was not available to any other Israelite child. Through a sequence of events Moses was adopted into Pharaoh's family and raised within the royal court (Exod 2:1-10).¹² Scripture does not reveal much about Moses' education, but he was a member of Pharaoh's family for the first 40 years of his life. There must have been an anticipation that he would participate in some level of leadership with Egypt. He did, just not in a way anyone, especially Moses, could have anticipated.

Vision is a Biblical characteristic of leadership. Vision can be used to describe a way that God sometimes communicates with leaders. God's communication with Moses was unusual. Moses, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, had a theophany; an encounter with God. His was not a dream or a vision like his predecessors had. His call to leadership came with God speaking through a burning bush (Exod 3:1-6). Visions in the Bible tend to contain the idea that there is something non-physical about what is being seen; a dream or a mental image given to the person. Scripture indicates that the burning bush was very real. Moses was instructed to take off his sandals for he was standing on holy ground, that would indicate that there was something different about the

¹² J.A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage* (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 2005), 35.

encounter (Exod 3:5). From that point on Moses had an on going dialogue with God. The Scriptures do not give any detail how this communication took place. The Scriptures simply portray the communication between God and Moses as if two humans were having a conversation: “Moses said to the Lord . . . the Lord said to Moses . . .” (Exod 3:1-4:17).

Moses was not identified as a priest, but he did serve as an intermediary between God and the people (Exod 15:24-26). Initially Moses was an intermediary between God and Pharaoh on behalf of the people of Israel. The people were a nation that had yet to inhabit their land. They were a people with a common ancestry, a common identified faith, and a common oppressor. How significantly they were tied to the Covenant of Abraham and to a national identity is difficult to tell early in Exodus. It was as Moses repeatedly negotiated with Pharaoh with the result being increasing oppression that Israel’s unity grew. Initially their unity may have been founded in their hostility toward Moses as much as anything else (Exod 5:21).

Moses, as a leader, had to face great rejection. Pharaoh rejected Moses (Exod 10:28). There were times when the Israelites rejected Moses (Exod 14:11-12). He had a strong sense of call, even as he was reluctant to that call. He showed strength standing up to the Pharaoh, the people, even standing up to God.¹³

Times of discouragement were relatively frequent for Moses. He often felt overburdened by the responsibility he had (Num 11:11). In times like this God instructed Moses directly (Num 11:16), and indirectly through Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro (Exod 18:17-23). Both times Moses responded to this instruction and the application of the

¹³ Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, 102.

instruction was effective. Sharing the burden of responsibility, the ability to delegate, is good Biblical leadership.

Even with all that Moses had going for him; the education, the direct communication with God, the miracles, and the delegating Moses still doubted God's ability to accomplish all that God had promised. There were times when Moses fell into the trap of believing he was on his own to fulfill God's promises (Num 11:21-22). God's response was to remind Moses that it was God, not him, who was doing the work (Num 11:23). A struggle for leaders is to remember that God is responsible for fulfilling His vision; the leader is to be faithful not necessarily powerful. Do the participants in this project struggle with this?

Another characteristic of Biblical leadership that can be seen in Moses is humility. Moses faced opposition from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, from Israelites who would have preferred to stay in Egypt, and from his own family. Miriam and Aaron were not always faithful to Moses' leadership (Num 12:1). Moses' response was not what we would think of as a typical response. Rather than entering into a power struggle, or proving that God was on his side, Moses' response was one of trusting in God. Numbers 12:3 is a parenthetical statement that "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." The great leader of the people of Israel was a person of great humility. Humility is a biblical characteristic of leadership. How do the participants in this project maintain humility?

Moses was the first leader in the Bible to be a mentor and prepare his successor. In scripture it is very clear that Moses was grooming Joshua to lead the people. Moses communicated God's commands to teach the next generation about what God had done

for His people and to obey God's commands (Deut 11:19). Moses also prepared the next leader to lead God's people. Mentoring is an aspect of biblical leadership. This project will look at who has mentored the participants and who have the participants mentored?

Joshua was Moses' successor in leading the people of Israel. There are two characteristics of Joshua's leadership for which he is well known: one found at the beginning of the book of Joshua and one at the end. Scripture indicates that God spoke directly to Joshua as He did with Moses. God's initial instructions to Joshua include the directives to obey the law; to learn it, know it, and apply it. These instructions come with the promises of prosperity, success, and God's presence (Josh 1:1-9). Moses had given the people God's instruction to obey His law (Deut 8:1,6,11). By having some of his initial instructions to the people be identical with Moses' instructions Joshua established that, though there was someone else now leading the people of Israel, the direction of the leadership hadn't changed. Though there was a change in leadership, there was continuity in the leadership.

The other characteristic of Joshua's leadership came at the end of his time of leading the people of Israel. As he exhorted the people to follow God, he challenged them to, "...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Josh 24:15-16). Joshua challenged the people, gave them a choice, and let them know his choice; this is a model for biblical leadership. How do the participants challenge their congregations?

Scripture indicates that the Judges took the significant leadership roles for an era. There was a pattern of how Israel followed God in the days of the Judges. A generation

would follow the Lord until they died out. Then the new generation would do evil in the eyes of the Lord, become oppressed by a neighboring people, cry out to the Lord, God would raise up a leader who would deliver the people from their oppressor, the people would follow the Lord for a generation. The pattern would then repeat itself (Judg 2:10-19). The book of Judges focuses more on how each Judge came to leadership rather than how they led. There didn't seem to be a significant a pattern in the way the Judges led. The most famous character in Judges was Samson and it is difficult to see in Scripture how he led at all (Judg 13-16).

The role of king of Israel was a significant leadership position. The well-being of the nation was closely linked to the faithfulness of the king. The kings are rarely portrayed in a positive way. Even David and Solomon, who are generally thought to be effective leaders, are portrayed with their flaws and how their flaws detracts from the well-being of Israel as well as her future.

David was certainly a leader people loved to follow. I Samuel is filled with accounts of the people's loyalty to David. What is striking is David's loyalty to Saul as the Lord's anointed. Even though David had been anointed to be the next king of Israel (1 Sam 16), he honored Saul as king and would do nothing to accelerate his ascension to the throne (1 Sam 24). David was a leader with a loyal following and patience based in God's ability to fulfill His promises. David's flaws as leader of his household did significant harm to his ability to lead the country. David is portrayed as being uninvolved and unaware of what was going on in the lives of his children. The way that David

responded to, or rather did not really respond to, Absalom's reaction to Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13) crippled the rest of David's reign.¹⁴

Solomon is credited with being the wisest man who ever lived and being a great king (1 Kgs 4:29-34), however he also made many foolish choices that were contrary to God's directives. The building of the Temple and the Palace led Israel into financial bankruptcy (1 Kgs 6-7,). The Lord promised Solomon that the throne of Israel would be passed on from generation to generation if Solomon and his sons ruled with integrity (1 Kgs 9:4-5). God was also clear that if Solomon and his sons were not faithful God would reject Israel and all that Solomon had done (1 Kgs 9:6-9). Solomon had relationships with 1,000 women; this was reflective of a sexual bankruptcy and a spiritual bankruptcy, and led to God's rejection of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:9-11).

From this point on in Scripture there is a pattern that Israel's relationship with God was based on the faithfulness of the king; when the king was faithful to God the nation received blessings (1 Kgs 15:9-14), when the king was unfaithful to God the nation was rejected by God (1 Kgs 15:25-30).

Daniel certainly had great leadership skills. In a number of ways his situation and abilities were very similar to Joseph's. He had a very significant role in a nation where he was a foreigner. The Bible doesn't reveal much about Daniel's actual leading within the government. The narrative contains a great deal of apocalyptic images. Daniel's interpretation of the imagery to the king is significant, but how Daniel's contribution affects the people is unclear. What scripture does focus on was Daniel's faith in God and

¹⁴ Mary J. Evans, *The Message of Samuel: Personalities, Potential, Politics, and Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 223-224.

his courage in the face of adversity (Dan 1, 6), both are significant characteristics of Biblical leadership. How do the participants handle adversity?

Two of the greatest leaders in the Old Testament were Ezra and Nehemiah. They led the people of Israel in powerful and significant ways, and did so under tremendous adversity. Ezra led the people of Israel to return to living according to Mosaic Law. The people even went so far as to sever marriages that did not meet the criteria within the Mosaic Law (Ezra 9-10). Scripture identifies Ezra's zeal for and understanding of The Law as his leadership qualities. Ezra is described as being "well versed in the Law of Moses" and "devoted to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord" (Ezra 7:6,10). Study, knowledge, and zeal for God's Law are Biblical attributes of leadership. How do the participants communicate their zeal for God's Law?

Nehemiah worked alongside Ezra, he was a great and courageous leader of the Israelites who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. While serving as Cupbearer to the king (Neh 1:11), which was a significant job that required great bravery, Nehemiah became aware of the dire situation in Jerusalem. His first response was to fast and pray (Neh 1). He then took the courageous step of exposing his broken heart to the king (Neh 2:1-3). With the king expressing compassion for his sadness Nehemiah revealed a plan, which the king was receptive to (Neh 2:4-8). Nehemiah had become aware of a need, had a burden for it, had prayed about it, orchestrated a plan, and when the timing was right began to implement his plan. All of these are attributes of biblical leadership.

An aspect of Nehemiah's style of leadership that the author finds fascinating is that he didn't reveal his plan when he arrived in Jerusalem. Certainly people must have wondered why this important person had arrived? He must have been a celebrity among

the Jews, and yet he did not announce his reason for coming to Jerusalem upon his arrival. Instead he waited three days, and then went out at night to inspect the wall (Neh 2:11-16). Only upon inspecting the wall does Nehemiah share his vision with the people. He also shares with them his vision of God's blessing upon the task at hand (Neh 2:18). Vision is a significant reoccurring theme in Biblical leadership.

The fourth chapter of Nehemiah is one of the greatest examples of Biblical leadership. Nehemiah encourages his workers. He makes adaptations to the plan to address the threat of those who are hostile to their task. He continues to make adjustments to further reinforce the need to defend the work, the workers, and the wall. And throughout it all he reminded the people that God was fighting for them (Neh 4:4,14,20).

Nehemiah's leadership was not focused on just one task. In addition to his primary task of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, he sought to meet the needs of the people who were experiencing both famine and over taxation. His solution was twofold; first to not tax the people as previous governors had, and second to have those the people were indebted to forgive the debt. He made them promise in a way that made it abundantly clear that the debt was forgiven (Neh 5). How do the participants priorities and balance their variety of tasks?

Nehemiah showed perseverance in the face of continued opposition. When his enemies threatened him with rumors that would make it back to the king, Nehemiah simply stood firm and denied the rumors (Neh 6:8). When these enemies hired someone to mislead Nehemiah, God gave him the insight to see through their plot and he kept on going (Neh 6:10-13). He also had the ability to delegate well. Upon completion of the

wall Nehemiah put his brother Hanani and a man named Hananiah in charge of Jerusalem. Nehemiah described Hananiah as “a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do” (Neh 7:2).

Nehemiah and Ezra did not simply lead the people back to rebuild their temple, wall, and city. They led the people in a return to the faith of their fathers. The people’s desire to hear the Scriptures, their mourning when they became aware of how far from God’s law they had been living, and their vows to be zealous in obedience to the Law are the true reflection of Ezra and Nehemiah’s leadership. True Biblical leadership is bringing others to growing belief in and obedience to God (Neh 8-13). This author will seek to determine how the participants see their role in leading others to grow in their belief and obedience to God.

Certainly Jesus is the ultimate biblical model of leadership. By definition leading implies that someone is following. Jesus was a leader people followed. Following Jesus was not easy. Jesus said it would not be easy, but people still had a strong desire to follow Him (Luke 9:57-62). Jesus knew that many of his followers would not persevere in following Him. He knew that even His disciples would abandon Him. He recognized this, was discouraged by it, and yet pressed on (Matt 26:31-35). Biblical leadership isn’t contingent on the followers’ response. How the followers respond to the direction taken is a factor in how a leader leads, but not in the direction that the leader takes. Jesus gained great popularity (Matt 4:25), and cared for His followers in significant ways (Matt 14:13-21, 15:32-39). When Jesus taught on issues that were hard for His followers to hear many abandoned Him, but He taught on these truths nonetheless (John 6:60-71).

As Jesus' popularity grew so did the expectation of His followers. His critics commented on what He should and should not be doing. When He began to unveil His plan to His disciples they expressed their expectations, which were not in accord with what He was sharing (Matt 9:14, 11:2-3, 12:38, John 11). Jesus did not conform to the expectations of others and made it clear to Peter that to do so would be against God's will (Matt 16:21-28).

Jesus had vision. The Son of God, eternally existent, certainly could see all things. A significant aspect of His teaching was that this world and this life are not all there is, opening the eyes of His followers to see beyond themselves and their current condition. Much of His teaching dealt with the Kingdom of Heaven. Through the Kingdom of Heaven parables He sought to share with His followers the wonder and value of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 13:24-52).

Jesus had purpose. His purpose was to show people how to love God and love one another: to be the incarnation of God's love. His purpose was to be the demonstration of God's love (John 3:16), to do the will of His Father (John 6:38), to give life (John 10:10), and to offer eternal life (John 3:16). In His last hours he even expressed His preference not to do the will of His Father, but still submitted His will to the Father's (Matt 26:39).

Jesus had several specific goals for His leadership. First to die as an atonement offering for people's sin (Matt 20:28). Some of Jesus' last words on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), point to His accomplishing this task. He also came to prepare the Disciples to establish, grow and spread the church. Fairly early in Jesus' time with the disciples He sent them out to neighboring villages to do ministry. His instructions were

quite extensive and specific, He then sent them out. Jesus gave His disciples experiences in ministry, with plenty of opportunity for them to give Him feedback, so that He could further teach them and better prepare them for the task before them (Matt 10, Luke 10).

The Upper Room Discourse of John 13-16 is a summary of Jesus' teaching to His Disciples and His commissioning them for the task He had prepared them for. Upon His resurrection Jesus took one more opportunity to tell them what to do (Matt 28:18-20).

Jesus had two tiers of leaders among His followers. He selected a first tier of leadership made up of the 12 disciples (Matt 10:2). Within this group he had a core group made up of Peter, James and John, to whom He was closest (Matt 17:1, 26:37).¹⁵ Jesus had a second tier made up of 72 disciples (Luke 10:1).¹⁶ With both of these groups Jesus mentored and challenged them. He gave them responsibility and did not fix all their mistakes. He did not give up on them when they misunderstood or failed. He persevered in teaching them. The most important thing Jesus did for His followers was that He loved them and let them know that He loved them (John 13 - 17). How do the participants communicate love to their congregations?

There are many models of leadership. Jesus' model of leadership was a servant model: not to be served, but to serve (Matt 20:28). In Luke 22: 27 He said, "But I am among you as one who serves." The Apostle Paul captured the objective of Jesus' servant leadership in Philippians 2 when he tied the unity of the church in Philippi with Jesus'

¹⁵ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Matthew* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 370.

¹⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Luke* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 186.

humble, sacrificial leadership.¹⁷ What aspects of Jesus' leadership do the participants seek to model in their own leadership?

The Disciples were the first leaders of the Christian church. They were Disciples when they were literally following Jesus, they then became Apostles when, after His resurrection, Jesus commissioned them to spread the Gospel (Matt 28:18-20).

Even though the Apostles were clearly the leadership in the early church, there isn't much detail of individual leadership, but there are some patterns of how they led. They were bold and unashamed of what they believed and taught (Acts 2:14-4:30). They sought to meet the people's needs and they delegated some of the responsibility to the deacons (Acts 6:16). And when there was a disagreement they gathered and sought God's will on the issue (Acts 15:1-35).

Through the book of Acts and his Epistles we know that the Apostle Paul was primarily a church planter. He was more of a missionary than a long-term leader of a congregation, however there are some patterns of Biblical leadership that can be seen in Paul. His letters to those with whom he had a leadership role generally contain encouragement (1 Cor 1:4-9, 2 Cor 1:3-7, Eph 1:15-23, Phil 1:3-11), correction, and teaching (1 Cor 3-15, 2 Cor 2-13, Gal 1:6-6:18). In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul instructs the reader about the usefulness of Scripture. That it is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." Even though Paul was referring to what today is known as the Old Testament, he used his letters for the same purposes. Each of the actions is an aspect of biblical leadership.

¹⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Philippians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 83-102.

The Bible is filled with stories of leaders; each with their own gifts and abilities, strengths and weaknesses. The crucial ingredients for biblical leadership are a strong sense of being called to lead and a vision of how God is calling one to lead. How these ingredients of Biblical leadership are manifest in the participants of this project and how the presbytery is utilizing or underutilizing the gifts and abilities of these leaders is the purpose of this paper.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an abundance of literature on leadership. As mentioned in chapter 1 there may be an overabundance of material on leadership. For this project the real questions are, “What literature on leadership are the participants in this study using? And what have they found influential and helpful?” This author has chosen a very specific subsection of literature on leadership to review; literature on leadership that has influenced more than one of the five pastors participating in this project. The first book, *Hit the Bullseye: How Denominations Can Aim the Congregation At the Mission Field*, by Paul Borden, is a book that every pastor in the presbytery was required to read. The five pastors who are participating in this project were each asked to identify literature on leadership that had influenced them. Though there were a number of common authors there were only two books that were named multiple times: *The Contemplative Pastor* by Eugene Peterson, and *Courageous Leadership* by Bill Hybels.

In 2008 the Presbytery Executive had every pastor in Northumberland Presbytery read *Hit the Bullseye*. The book focuses on holding the pastor accountable for what is going on within the life of the congregation. *Hit the Bullseye* is a case study of the 229 congregations in Northern California that make up a regional judicatory called the American Baptist Churches of the West.¹ It documents how the congregations were in decline, but through leadership development and accountability trends were changed and growth took place.² Borden focuses on the paradigm shifts that took place within congregations and how those shifts affected the membership, worship attendance, and

¹ Paul D. Borden, *Hit the Bullseye: How Denominations Can Aim the Congregation At the Mission Field* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 26.

² Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 26.

giving numbers for congregations within the region. The first paradigm shift had to do with the role of pastor. The misconception of the role of the shepherd and expectation that the pastor functions as a chaplain had to be replaced with an accurate understanding of what a shepherd actually does and a focus on the pastor as leader.³ The second shift meant doing away with the identity that the congregation is a family and replacing it with the identity of an army.⁴ The impression the book gives is that the administration for this regional group of congregations took a very aggressive approach with the pastors and congregational leadership. Pastors whose congregation did not show a growth of at least five percent in average worship attendance over three years would not be welcome to receive a call to another congregation within the region.⁵ The policy was “met with shock and disbelief.”⁶ The leadership of the region did an “organizational triage.”⁷ The leadership’s rationale for imposing significant changes was that, “God is equally interested in fruitfulness along with faithfulness.”⁸ This author believes Eugene Peterson, author of *The Contemplative Pastor*, would strongly disagree with such statements.

Pastors who did not exhibit the gift of leadership were encouraged to move on.⁹ The imposed changes evidently had the desired effect, as the percentage of congregations that were growing went from less than 20% to over 70%.¹⁰ At the end of six years 60% of the pastoral leadership was still the same.¹¹ It would appear that the accountability and the training had the desired effect.

³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 21.

⁴ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 23.

⁵ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 35.

⁶ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 48.

⁷ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

⁸ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

⁹ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 49.

¹⁰ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 37.

¹¹ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 53.

Hit the Bullseye is a focused work. One of the focal points is leadership. “All these changes went back to leadership and new leaders. . . either good leadership or poor leadership.”¹² They did acknowledge that different leadership skills are required to lead larger congregations than are needed to lead smaller congregations.¹³ This idea is not addressed by Hybels or Peterson. *Hit the Bullseye*’s model of leadership calls for pastors to step away from the “chaplain-mode”, calling it “limiting” and leaving the pastor “ministering to only very needy and co-dependent people.”¹⁴ Again, this author wonders how Peterson would respond to such statements? This statement and similar ones were not well received by the members of Northumberland Presbytery. Though the book in presenting its case study was seen by some in the presbytery as an “overly simple how to” it did acknowledge that every congregation is a “unique entity, a micro-culture”, with external factors and internal factors creating the uniqueness. The external factors are the demographics for the greater community. Internal factors are “the congregation’s history, values, beliefs, self-image, and perceived strengths and weaknesses.”¹⁵ This author believes the book does a good job of addressing the uniqueness of congregations and did not present a single way to “fix a church.” Rather the judicatory would identify common areas where congregations frequently have trouble; they would use a survey, a self-study, and interviews to pinpoint the problem areas within a particular congregation.¹⁶

According to the book the strategy was successful, but at what cost? Many pastors were moved out. How many heartbroken congregants went with them? These

¹² Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 57.

¹³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 58.

¹⁴ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 71.

¹⁵ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 81.

¹⁶ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 84.

are the questions that were asked by members of this presbytery during a presbytery wide discussion of the book.

The general feeling of the presbytery was that the discussion was not productive. This author believes that can be attributed to three factors: format, time allotment, and content. The discussion consisted of a brief time for small group discussion on the entire book, followed by a similar length of time for a large group discussion. The small groups did not have time to form any kind of report within the group, they were given too much to discuss, and not enough time to have any significant discussions. If there had been a series of small group sessions held during successive presbytery meetings, each session addressing only a chapter or two, then small group time may have been more productive. The same can be said for the plenary session, more time dealing with sections of the book rather than the whole could have made a difference. As it was, all that came out of either venue were sound bites, people only had enough time to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the basic premise of the book. The direction of the content of the book can be summed up in a couple of quotes: “The vitality of the congregation is related to the quality of leadership being provided by the pastor of the congregation,”¹⁷ and “Until denominations focus on the local congregations in a new way and embrace true leadership they will continue to become more irrelevant and lose even more support from the adherents within and the observers without.”¹⁸ In general the presbytery did not seem to agree with these statements. In chapter one this author provided the data that revealed the decline of membership and worship attendance within the presbytery.

Northumberland Presbytery and the American Baptist Churches of the West (as the case

¹⁷ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 105.

¹⁸ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 27.

study began) seem to have similar trends. The discussion at the presbytery meeting turned into little more than an exchange of sound bites. These tended to be rather critical of the book, even while, through their defensive criticism of these statements, reinforcing the very points the book was making. The participating pastors will be asked what they thought of *Hit the Bullseye* and what from the book they think should be applied to Northumberland Presbytery.

This author has solicited from the five pastors participating in this project a list of the literature on leadership that they have found most significant in their life and ministry. One book that was mentioned by Bob and Steve was *Courageous Leadership* by Bill Hybels. This author did find this book to be informative, practical, Biblically based and inspirational.

This author believes Hybels would agree with the aggressive leadership style promoted in *Hit the Bullseye*. He would appreciate the changes in leadership, leadership training, goal setting, accountability, and recognition of success that are a part of the *Hit the Bullseye* model. Yet, for all his success, influence, and aggressive leadership style the first thing that struck this author about Bill Hybels was the attitude of humility he brought to writing *Courageous Leadership*. He speaks of stumbling and bumbling his way to a degree of leadership maturity.¹⁹ This tone of humility continues as he introduces the motivation in writing the book. He speaks of the leadership mistakes he has made and his reluctance to write on leadership. He then identifies his belief that the local church is the hope for the world and the development of the spiritual gift of leadership is a necessary step for the hope to become a reality.²⁰

¹⁹ Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 9.

²⁰ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 11-12.

Hybels repeats again and again that, “the local church is the only hope for the world.”²¹ He sees the church being in a unique position because of the local church’s ability to transform the human heart.²² The author would clarify this statement to say what Hybels means is, “God has chosen to transform the human heart through the local church.” This would explain Hybels’ passion for ministry and notoriety as “one of most successful pastors in America.” He goes on to identify that the only constant among congregations that are working right is the exercise of the gift of leadership.²³

From Hybels’ perspective and experience vision is the most important aspect of leadership. “Vision. It’s the most potent weapon in a leader’s arsenal. It’s the weapon that unleashes the power of the church.”²⁴ Hybels quotes Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision the people perish (KJV).” This is the negative side of Hybel’s argument, he tends to focus on the positive. For Hybels, leadership and vision are almost synonymous. Vision comes from leaders. He defines vision as, “a picture of the future that produces passion.”²⁵ He describes it as something God has given to a leader that becomes their driving force. He does say that most often this vision/driving force comes through experience and is not formed in a vacuum. For Hybels, a leader is also someone who when they share their vision, others want to follow and get involved in that vision; whose vision is contagious.²⁶ He does make it clear that the vision should not come out of what people are interested in following rather, the vision comes first and then people follow. This author appreciated that Hybels encourages the exercise of spiritual disciplines in

²¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 15.

²² Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 18.

²³ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 26.

²⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 50.

²⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 32.

²⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 35-36.

confirming and clarifying the vision. He then mentions the three things vision does for a particular group/ church: it increases energy and moves people to action, it increases ownership in the ministry of the church, and it provides focus.²⁷ The other element of Hybels' instruction concerning vision that really struck this author was how to communicate the vision to the congregation. He encouraged one-on-one communication with key leaders. Then communicating to the congregation, but doing so at the right time of the year, September and January. Finally he said, "Vision leaks."²⁸ The congregation must be reminded to keep up their enthusiasm and their focus.

Hybels demonstrates the accuracy of the title of this book in his teaching on fundraising. He is very clear that the primary leader must take the lead in raising the funds to meet the ministry needs and to fulfill the vision they have for the congregation. He gives this person the title of CRC (chief resource raiser).²⁹ Like every major topic in this book Hybels starts with the mistakes and early struggles he has made in this area. He then is unapologetic in his strong views on the importance of having adequate resources and the proper stewardship of those resources. He states that most pastors are "unprepared to be a fundraiser." Until they accept this responsibility the church will never be what it can be.³⁰ He touches on, but does not spend much time on, the theological reality that God is the source of all things. He quickly moves onto sources of giving and the distribution of the resources. He speaks of challenging the congregation financially and the spiritual growth that can take place through such a challenge.³¹ He then shares five principles he has concerning resources: education, information,

²⁷ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 45-47.

²⁸ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 44.

²⁹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 93.

³⁰ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 98.

³¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 102.

simplicity, strategic discipling, and vision. To this author the most interesting ideas raised by Hybels are the strategic discipling and vision. He speaks of people “afflicted” with affluence and their desire to give not to a program or person, but a vision. The author believes Hybels is correct in his teaching here, and agrees that many pastors are timid in approaching the “afflicted” and reluctant to share their vision with the “afflicted.” Hybels is very straightforward in his ideas on compensation. It is basically a business model; the more responsibility and success one has, the greater their compensation.³²

Hybels’ next element of courageous leadership is leadership development. “We must identify emerging leaders, invest in them, give them kingdom responsibilities, and coach them into effectiveness.”³³ He believes leaders are “at their best” when they are investing in the development of future leaders and must make this a top priority.³⁴ The investment in future leaders is labor intensive, but Hybels points to success of leadership development in corporate America; its importance and payoff.³⁵ He points to a pattern of current leaders and their being identified as potential leaders, then being mentored and given leadership opportunities.³⁶ Throughout the book Hybels lists qualities necessary in individuals for them to be good leadership material, the lists are consistent in identified qualities. This author will be interested to discover who saw the leadership qualities in the five pastoral leaders in this study and how they were mentored. This will be explored in chapter 4. Also to learn about whom these pastoral leaders have mentored, what qualities they looked for, how they mentored, and where their mentorees are now?

³² Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 118.

³³ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 138.

³⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 122.

³⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 133.

³⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 124-126.

One fear with a book like *Courageous Leadership* and someone as successful as Hybels is the promotion of a cookie cutter approach to leadership, “this is what worked for me and all leaders should do it this way.” Fortunately Hybels, even with all his very specific instruction, does not believe in a single style or method of leadership.³⁷ He lists ten leadership styles and gives some definition and direction for each style. The ten leadership styles identified are: visionary, directional, strategic, managing, motivational, shepherding, team-building, entrepreneurial, reengineering, and bridge-building. Of the ten leadership styles identified, Hybels observed that both Joseph and Nehemiah had “the managing leadership style.”³⁸ He identified Jesus as a motivational leader.³⁹ Hybels identifies David as a shepherding leader.⁴⁰ This author can see some validity in this identification, but believes there is probably stronger evidence of David as a motivational leader. Hybels sees the Apostle Paul as the model of an entrepreneurial leader, one who had to be involved in something new.⁴¹ Most leaders will be a combination of two or more leadership styles. This author will be interested in discovering which leadership style each of the five pastors participating in this study has, and how they work with that style in their ministry.

Courageous Leadership has two parallel themes running through it: how to lead a church, and what kind of leader are you? In his chapter on decision making Hybels has plenty of “how.” He identifies six different factors that go into decision-making: core beliefs, honoring God, valuing people, “what others leaders I respected would do, risk

³⁷ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 139.

³⁸ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 145.

³⁹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 147.

⁴⁰ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 149.

⁴¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 152.

assessment, and consulting others.⁴² This author believes the most helpful insight of this chapter is in readers using this text as a guide in examining their own decision making process. Hybels saves the most significant information/questions for the end of the chapter, “Is there enough quietness in your life for you to hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit?”⁴³ Early on in the chapter he shares one of his core beliefs; “If I do my best to honor God in everything I do, He will honor my leadership.”⁴⁴ This author finds this overly simplistic especially considering those who have suffered and those who have been martyred for their faithful leadership. At the end of the chapter he recounts the many times he has received credit for something that was solely the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ Hybels does not connect the latter as the manifestation of the former. This author will ask the five pastors in this study what enters into their decision making process? Do they rely heavily on the Holy Spirit? Who do they consult? How much of a factor is past experience? Do they see themselves as risk takers?

Hybels next focused on the health of the leaders. For many leaders this may be the most helpful information within *Courageous Leadership*. He points out that the one responsible for the health of the leader is the leader themselves. He calls it self-leadership and a quote from Dee Hock quantifies Hybels’ value of self-leadership, “It is management of self that should occupy 50 percent of our time and the best of our ability.” Hybels goes through a series of questions every leader should be asking themselves to make sure that they are leading clearly, effectively, and in a healthy manner. These questions have to do with calling, vision, passion, utilization of spiritual

⁴² Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 161-180.

⁴³ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 180.

⁴⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 164.

⁴⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 179.

gifts, character, pride, fear, and pace. In each section he makes it clear that it is the leader's responsibility to manage themselves in this area.⁴⁶ The five pastors of this study will be asked about each of these areas to see how they manage themselves, to see where their strengths and weaknesses are in their self-leadership. Their elders will be asked how they believe their pastor does in managing himself?

The next aspect of leadership that Hybels addresses is that of growth. He uses Biblical characters as models of certain leadership strengths. He then calls leaders to pray, as he does, that God will grow these attributes within them. Hybels identifies David's optimism.⁴⁷ He speaks of Jonathan's capacity to love. Hybels even says he would, "rather be known for being a man of love than a man of vision."⁴⁸ Other attributes are Joseph's integrity,⁴⁹ Joshua's decisiveness,⁵⁰ Esther's courage,⁵¹ Solomon's wisdom,⁵² Jeremiah's emotional authenticity,⁵³ Nehemiah's commitment to celebration,⁵⁴ Peter's initiative,⁵⁵ and Paul's intensity.⁵⁶ This author thinks Hybels spread himself a little thin with this teaching. There was an expectation of anticipated growth in all of these areas. Up to this point Hybels has been encouraging leaders to find their style and their strength. To this author, it seems that he now encourages leaders to pray to be "super-leader." Instead of praying for growth, accompanied by God's grace, for the areas God has chosen not to grow the leader Hybels concludes with "May our prayers shape us,

⁴⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 183,186,187,188,190,192,194,195.

⁴⁷ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 200.

⁴⁸ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 202.

⁴⁹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 202.

⁵⁰ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 204.

⁵¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 206.

⁵² Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 207.

⁵³ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 208.

⁵⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 209.

⁵⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 210.

⁵⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 211.

and may God's grace lift us to our full leadership potential.⁵⁷ This author views potential as a worldly standard rather than a biblical one.

Hybels mandates that spiritual leaders draw close and stay close to God. He paraphrases I Corinthians 13 to make his point.⁵⁸ The point is valid; this author does not believe the use of I Cor. 13 to make the point is valid. Hybels points out that leaders can use various means to draw close to God. He borrows from *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas⁵⁹ to identify seven pathways that leaders may use for spiritual nourishment. They are: relational, intellectual, serving, contemplative, activist, creation, and worship.⁶⁰ Hybels concludes by encouraging every leader to identify their pathway. This author believes this is great instruction for spiritual leaders. The stereotype seems to be that every spiritual leader's pathway to spiritual nourishment should be through the contemplative spiritual disciplines. This leaves many leaders feeling guilty about not participating enough in those disciplines and guilty about not finding them as nutritious as others have. Hybel's instruction frees spiritual leaders to seek their nourishment in a way that actually appeals to their distinctive pathway. He concludes the chapter by encouraging the reader to "maximize your spiritual growth, lean into your best way of connecting with God, but then begin to experiment with each of the others."⁶¹ This project will seek to determine which of the pathways each of the pastors finds nutritious.

The final chapter of Hybels' book focuses on one more aspect and in a sense sums up what he means by *Courageous Leadership*: Endurance. "How am I going to find the

⁵⁷ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 213.

⁵⁸ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 216.

⁵⁹ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 21-29.

⁶⁰ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 217-226.

⁶¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 229.

strength to keep going, given the weight of the pressures facing me at church?”⁶² He speaks of the tendency and frequent occurrence of burnout, being overwhelmed by the stress and responsibilities, and twice says, “the higher the speed (the faster you go), the more painful (spectacular) the crash.”⁶³ Hybels then gives instruction on how to endure and avoid burnout: stay true to your calling, learn how to say no,⁶⁴ develop safe relationships,⁶⁵ and participate in recreation.⁶⁶ Like the rest of the book, much of the content is based on personal anecdotes. The pastors participating in this project seem to have a good handle on endurance in spiritual leadership, this author will be interested to see how each handles the stresses of ministry and has incorporated the ingredients for endurance into their own lives (especially Dick, who has served the same congregation for 45 years).

The contrast between Bill Hybels and Eugene Peterson, author of *The Contemplative Pastor*, could not be greater. Hybels pastors a “Mega-church”, Peterson pastored a church with about 300 members and made the conscious decision to never pastor a church larger than that.⁶⁷ Their views on spiritual leadership are very different as well. This author will frequently identify the contrast between these two role models of spiritual leadership. Since Borden, in *Hit the Bullseye*, dealt more with systems, his focus was less on how pastors pastor than Peterson and Hybels. Peterson’s goal was to be identified as a “dependable pastor,”⁶⁸ though, as he will explain, this doesn’t mean being at the congregation’s beck and call. His priorities for spiritual leadership involve

⁶² Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 231.

⁶³ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 232-233.

⁶⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 234.

⁶⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 247.

⁶⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 244.

⁶⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1989), 1.

⁶⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 2.

“spirituality, the importance of place, the role of creativity, the centrality of community, and the necessity of Christian subversion.”⁶⁹ Peterson saw his call very closely tied to a particular people at a particular time, he called it locality.⁷⁰ Hybels’ focus was on casting a vision and bringing others on board to the vision God has given to the leader. Peterson speaks of becoming aware of what God is already doing and then participating in it.⁷¹ Do the pastors involved in this project more closely identify with Hybel’s visionary style/model of leadership or with Peterson’s “dependable pastor” model of leadership?

For Peterson, Christians need to be subversive, counter-cultural. He identifies this need in pastoral leadership. To accept the culture’s definition of pastor is to be “rendered harmless.”⁷² He redefines pastor as “unbusy, subversive, and apocalyptic.”⁷³ He identifies busyness as a form of works righteousness and a betrayal to salvation by faith alone.⁷⁴ He sees busyness as a result of either vanity or laziness: the vanity of wanting to appear important or the laziness of allowing others to determine the pastor’s agenda.⁷⁵ Peterson believes a pastor should do three things: pray, preach, and listen.⁷⁶ He does offer a very practical method of setting aside the time to block out these three things, “the unquestioned authority of the appointment calendar.” By saying “my calendar will not permit me to . . .” pastors can have the time to keep praying, preaching, and listening at the center of what they do.⁷⁷ His encouragement is for pastors to be more like Mary than

⁶⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 3.

⁷⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 4.

⁷¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 4.

⁷² Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

⁷³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

⁷⁴ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 17.

⁷⁵ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 18.

⁷⁶ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 19, 20, 21.

⁷⁷ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 22.

Martha.⁷⁸ Hybels and Peterson actually encourage similar priorities for pastoral leadership though they arrive at these very differently. Hybels is very pragmatic; this is what the pastor needs to do to survive, and in *Courageous Leadership* he shared how he often had to fight for the boundaries. Peterson is much more philosophical/theological; this is who the pastor is called to be. How do the pastors in this project determine their boundaries and priorities? How have they worked with their leadership to arrive at these? How do their leadership feel about their boundaries and priorities?

Hybels believes that the church is the answer for the problems of the world, Peterson would agree. Hybels implies the church just has to do what it does better; have more Willow Creeks. Peterson calls this “Naïveté”. We think the church is already the kingdom of God and, if only better organized and motivated, can conquer the world.”⁷⁹ Peterson calls pastors to be counter-cultural “undermining the kingdom of self and establishing the kingdom of God.”⁸⁰ The way of doing this is by being subversive. Peterson laments that, “many pastors –slip into the role of chaplain to the culture.”⁸¹ Some attack the culture by directly attacking sin, Peterson calls this “ineffective.” “Hitting sin head-on is like hitting a nail with a hammer; it only drives it deeper.”⁸² Peterson calls on pastors to be subversive, as Jesus was subversive. He points out Jesus’ use of parables; how they were inoffensive at face value, snuck their way into the heart, and then allowed the imagination to percolate. Peterson identifies “three things implicit in subversion: 1. The status quo is wrong and must be overthrown if the world is going to be livable. 2. There is another world ‘aborning’ that is livable. 3. The usual means of

⁷⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 23.

⁷⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 36.

⁸⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 27.

⁸¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 30.

⁸² Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 32.

change are not available.”⁸³ Peterson believes subversion is the method pastors must use to be about God’s kingdom work. Hybels had no such subversive ideas. Do the pastors in the project see their role as subversive? Are they trying to do a better job of what the church already does or are they trying to introduce “another world”?

Peterson continues the idea of pastors being counter-cultural by encouraging pastors to be apocalyptic as the Apostle John was an Apocalyptic Pastor.⁸⁴ He uses the book of Revelation as a “case study.”⁸⁵ Peterson says, “Apocalypse is arson – it secretly sets a fire in the imaginations that boils the fat out of an obese culture-religion and renders a clear gospel love, a pure gospel hope, a purged gospel faith.”⁸⁶ Peterson slams modern day pastors for “eroding” real prayer by facilitating people taking short-cuts by having the pastor praying for them, instead of participating in prayer that is difficult and leads people into the presence of God.⁸⁷ This is similar to the misconception of shepherding pastor that Borden addressed. Peterson sees the pastor’s role in prayer as to “pay attention to God and lead others to pay attention to God.”⁸⁸ How do the pastors in this project pray with people, for people, and lead people in prayer? Do they fall into stereotypical pastor-shepherd care giving that Borden was critical of, giving people shortcuts? Or do they lead people in the hard work of prayer as Peterson advocates?

Peterson sees a pastor’s use of language as essential to their Apocalyptic leadership role and he laments their general sloppiness in the proper and creative use of language. “Poetry is essential to the pastoral vocation because poetry is original

⁸³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 34.

⁸⁴ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 40.

⁸⁵ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 42.

⁸⁶ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 41.

⁸⁷ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 43.

⁸⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 44.

speech.”⁸⁹ “Every time badly used or abused language is carried by pastors into prayers and preaching and direction, the Word of God is cheapened. We cannot use a bad means to a good end.”⁹⁰ Do the pastors of this project see themselves as poets using language correctly, creatively, and carefully?

Patience is the final element in the Apocalyptic Pastor triad. Peterson returns to the Apostle John and speaks of his “unhurried urgency.” The urgency is due to the importance of the message, the patience is required because of the “vast mysteries of God.”⁹¹ Peterson laments results oriented programs that are too quickly abandoned and erode the pastor’s time for the patient work that is truly required. “All that matters is worshipping God, dealing with evil, and developing faithfulness.”⁹² Hybels and Borden would seem to be polar opposites of Peterson on this matter; where on the spectrum do the pastors of this project land?

Peterson expresses his love for, and his skill, comfort, and clarity in his ability to be a pastor on Sundays. He does this as he begins to address the challenge of being a pastor the other six days of the week, what he calls “Ministry amid the traffic.”⁹³ Peterson contrasts the two primary roles of the pastor: running the church and “the cure of souls.”⁹⁴ He exhorts pastors to rediscover the pastoral work of cure of souls, while not ignoring the running of the church. Hybels would certainly endorse the cure of souls, but his gifts and experience would seem to lean toward running the church. Borden wouldn’t be opposed to cure of souls, but his focus was definitely on running the church. Peterson

⁸⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 45.

⁹⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 46.

⁹¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 47.

⁹² Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 48.

⁹³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 53.

⁹⁴ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

sees a renewal in pastors participating in the cure of souls and calls it “the single most significant and creative thing happening in pastoral ministry today.”⁹⁵ He sees the cure of souls not as a devotional exercise, but as a way of life.⁹⁶ He does acknowledge that pastors must “run the church.” He exhorts a balance of the two responsibilities that are often in competition for a pastor’s time and energy. Peterson identifies three areas of contrast: initiative, language, and problems. The contrast in all three areas is essentially the same. In the running of the church the pastor is obviously active. In the cure of souls God’s activity is recognized and the pastor, though involved, is more passive. Peterson raises the doctrine of “Prevenience” which is simply the recognition that God has been at work all along and whatever humans enter into is already a work in progress.⁹⁷ This author believes this is a very significant and under realized doctrine. How do the pastors in the project balance the running of the church and the cure of souls? How do they recognize prevenience in their work? Peterson returns to this idea later in the book as he encourages pastors to use the middle voice, neither active nor passive, but attentive for the will of God within the circumstance. He speaks of the art of “willed passivity.”⁹⁸ This comes from a reverence for God’s work in the world.

Peterson exhorts pastors to focus on the language of prayer, “my primary educational task as pastor was to teach people to pray.”⁹⁹ He sees three sections of language: intimacy and relationship, information, and motivation. He believes too much preaching is focused on information and motivation, not on intimacy and relationship with God. “I have determined that the language that I must be most practiced and for

⁹⁵ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 57.

⁹⁶ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 59.

⁹⁷ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 60.

⁹⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 106.

⁹⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 89.

which I have primary responsibility for teaching proficiency in others is the language of relationship, the language of prayer.”¹⁰⁰ How much do the selected pastors teach on prayer and the language of relationship?

Continuing in the idea of pastoring between Sundays, “pastoring in the midst of traffic”, Peterson writes of pastors’ need to make small talk. Pastoral work specializes in the ordinary.¹⁰¹ He speaks of pastors practicing “conversational humility”¹⁰² and not taking every opportunity to boldly proclaim the Gospel or enter into deep theological discussions.

Returning to the “Sunday morning” work of the pastor, Peterson sees a “tug of war” between what the congregation’s perceived need is and what the pastor knows the people need. People tend to focus on their “worldly” needs, while the pastor’s focus is their spiritual need.¹⁰³ The pastor needs to never forget that the congregation is made up of sinners “who bring nothing in themselves of worth.” This prevents the pastor from resenting the congregation and being angry with them.¹⁰⁴ Peterson believes “people don’t feel they are very good at the Christian life.”¹⁰⁵ This can lead to an idolatry of the pastor. His way of combating this is to use Paul’s practice of seeing growth in the congregation and encouraging them in that growth. Peterson calls it “a meticulous eye for the signs of grace.”¹⁰⁶ How do the selected pastors view their congregations? How do they combat the potential idolatry of the pastor?

¹⁰⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 94.

¹⁰¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 112.

¹⁰² Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 115.

¹⁰³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 118.

¹⁰⁴ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 119.

¹⁰⁵ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 122.

¹⁰⁶ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 124.

Peterson identifies the differences between a job, a craft, and a profession. To do a job successfully is to please the client. A craft deals with visible realities. A profession deals with invisible realities. He calls pastors to be professional. This means dealing with the invisible reality of God and seeking to please Him. Ministering with integrity rather than going through the motions seeking to please those being ministered to.¹⁰⁷ He is exhorting pastors not to compromise or be pragmatic, but ask themselves, “Am I keeping the line clear between what I am committed to and what people are asking of me?”¹⁰⁸ For Peterson, the key to keeping this line sharp is ordination; remembering that one has been set apart to keep the people on track.¹⁰⁹ Peterson calls pastors to be skilled in casual conversation and also to live a life set apart always keeping God, kingdom, and the Gospel at the heart of who we are, what we do, and who we are accountable to. This is a most difficult combination. Do the selected pastors feel this same tension, and if so, how do they find balance?

Peterson concludes *The Contemplative Pastor* by sharing his story of his sabbatical. Though he never says, “every pastor should take a sabbatical”, there is an implied endorsement that, under the right circumstances both the congregation and the pastor can benefit from a sabbatical. Have the pastors in this project considered a sabbatical? If so, what were the circumstances and what were the positive and negative results? If not, why not?

There are thousands of volumes on leadership, but literature only makes an impact if read. This author has only focused on three works that have had an impact on the pastors selected for this project. This author has given his perspective on these books.

¹⁰⁷ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 133.

¹⁰⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 134.

¹⁰⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 138.

It will be very interesting to see how these books have impacted the selected pastors and their ministries.

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATING PASTORS

The purpose of this research study is to seek to determine the leadership styles of five selected pastors from congregations within the Northumberland Presbytery, P.C. (USA). The pastors have been asked to participate in this research study because they have each demonstrated sustained effective leadership within one of the more vibrant congregations within Northumberland Presbytery. Each participant will be interviewed in effort to understand their leadership experiences, their vision for leadership, and what sustains them in leadership.¹ The goal is to help the presbytery better understand the perspective pastors have on leadership, vision, the oversight of the Session, and what sustains them: to see if there are similar or contrasting styles of leadership among the participants.

For this project the author met individually with four of the participants and interviewed them over lunch. The fifth, Ollie, because he had taken a call to a congregation in Georgia, responded to the questions in writing. The questions sought to gain an understanding of the participants' awareness and understanding of their leadership abilities, their experiences, their mentors, and their utilization of gifts/abilities. There is significant focus on vision versus shepherding. Many of the questions have their origins in the books *Hit the Bullseye: How Denominations Can Aim the Congregation At the Mission Field*, by Paul D. Borden, *Courageous Leadership*, by Bill Hybels, and *The Contemplative Pastor*, by Eugene Peterson.

¹ All participants have given written permission to use their comments in this thesis project.

Reverend Dr. William Younger

Billy has pastored the Lycoming Centre Presbyterian Church since March of 1999.² He considers himself to be a good leader and works hard at his leadership skills. The greatest influence on his leadership style has been his father-in-law, The Reverend Doctor David C. Fisher. Fisher is a well-known pastor who has pastored several congregations with national reputations: Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts and Colonial Church of Edina, Minnesota. Billy seeks to use the leadership style of Jesus as a model. He has also been influenced by writings of high profile pastors John Piper and Tim Keller.

The person Billy identified as the one who first saw leadership abilities in him was his youth pastor. Billy remembers him saying, “Billy you have gifts.” Dr. Fisher has been his primary mentor; teaching him, leading him, and discipling him one on one. Dr. Fisher used the “with-me principle.”

These days Billy sees his top leadership responsibility as motivating long time leaders and training new leadership. He is very intentional in this motivation and training. This author believes Billy is highly successful in carrying out this responsibility.

In the leadership role he sees himself more of a shepherd than a visionary, and yet this author sees him as one of the more dynamic leaders of the presbytery. Billy appreciates the accountability structures within the denomination. He says, “that is why I’m a Presbyterian.” He believes he is highly accountable to the session.

Billy’s desire for accountability is reflected in his appreciation for the strategies laid out in the book *Hit The Bullseye* by Paul Borden. He agreed in principle to the

² Interview with William Younger, interviewed by author, Lewisburg PA, October 20, 2009.

accountability aspect within the book, as long as it was for the “advancement of the Gospel. He did not have a problem with the idea that a pastor who did not participate in the leadership training, church growth strategies, and goal setting, would not be welcome to take another call within the district. Billy qualified his response with, “as long as there were expectations up front.” When asked if he agreed with the statement made within the book that, “God is equally interested in fruitfulness as He is in faithfulness,”³ his answer was, “Absolutely, but God cares as much for who we are as He does in what we do.” Billy does believe that the implementation of such strategies within Northumberland Presbytery would be very difficult. “Maybe too strong of medicine, too difficult to swallow.” Ultimately he thought it would be good for the presbytery, but it would be tough.

The Apostle Peter is the leader within the Bible that Billy most identifies with. He identifies with Peter’s impulsiveness, how his fickle ideals often conflicted with the reality of his actions. “Peter would be the hero one day and hard and jaded the next.”

Billy has found that at times he does spend a disproportionate amount of time and energy being the “chaplain to the needy”⁴ rather than equipping lay leaders and leading the congregation. He works hard against falling into the role of chaplain; he fears it leads to burnout. He is very intentional in being about the work of advancing the gospel, not running a “convalescent center. “

Billy believes that the vitality of a congregation is related to the quality of the pastoral leadership. He acknowledges that there are other factors, but the longer a pastor’s tenure the greater the correlation between pastoral leadership and congregational

³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

⁴ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 71.

vitality. Having said that, he does not believe himself to be a visionary leader; energetic yes, visionary no. He shares that role/responsibility with leaders within the congregation who do have vision. These leaders may or may not have formal leadership roles within the congregation. Billy feels that he struggles in communicating with the congregation the vision he has for the congregation. The pulpit is the primary means of communication, though he also shares it in conversation with leaders.

Hybels wrote about the pastor being the chief resource (funds and other assets) raiser for the congregation.⁵ Billy does see this as one of his responsibilities and believes he is adequately prepared for that task. When asked if he was more bold than timid in approaching people of means about giving, Billy was quick to say, “bold”. He went on to say that he is fairly bold in encouraging giving whether it is to something specific and special or regular and general. This author sees this boldness as a reflection of Billy’s zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Billy is intentional in spending time and energy on developing future leaders. When asked where some of his disciples are today, Billy interpreted the question in two ways. First those he discipled a long time ago, where are they now? A number of them are in ministry, many are lay-leaders, most are still active in their Christian faith. Second, where today is he finding disciples? His answer was, “as much outside the church as inside.” Billy is an active hunter; primarily bow hunting. He has developed many friendships through hunting; most of them have no interest in the church. As they get to know Billy, their interest in the church may not increase, but with several of his hunting buddies, their interest in Jesus has increased.

⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 93.

In *Courageous Leadership*, Hybels identified ten leadership styles: visionary, directional, strategic, managing, motivational, shepherding, team building, entrepreneurial, reengineering, and bridge-building.⁶ Of those Billy sees his style as a combination of shepherding, strategic, and team building. Shepherding in his care for the congregation, strategic in his developing ministry and direction for the congregation, and team building in working with his leaders.

In his decision-making he relies heavily on the Holy Spirit. He seeks to always be in touch with the Spirit, but when making a big decision he “picks up the tempo.” He consults his wife, father-in-law, and trusted confidants. Past experience is also a big factor. In making decisions he does not see himself as much of a risk taker. His decisions are much more “based on how things have gone in the past.”

Billy believes he is competent at managing himself. He knows his pitfalls and has grown significantly in self-management in the past ten years. He has matured in his ability to stay true to his calling, true to his vision, true to his passion, and true to his character. He seeks to utilize the spiritual gifts he has been given. One area of his self-management that is still a growth area is pride. An area he feels that he has really hit his stride in is pacing himself. One way he has accomplished this is through having enough recreational things in his life: running, hunting, and other outdoor activities.

When asked how his elders see him doing in managing himself? “I’ve got them fooled,” was his answer that was accompanied with a big laugh. The answer said in jest, contained truth within it as well. He went on to explain that his elders see him managing himself well, because that is what he shows them. There have been times in the past

⁶ Hybels, *Hit the Bullseye*, 139.

when he was not doing a very good job of self-management, but his elders were none the wiser.

Billy believes that he is maturing as a leader and growing in confidence in his leadership abilities and his role as a leader. Every five years he takes a personal retreat to reflect on the past five years. In these past five years he has grown in his self-awareness as a leader.

In responding to the list of ways of staying close to God that Hybels borrows from *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas: relational, intellectual, serving, contemplative, activist, creation, and worship⁷ Billy said that he has used all of the above in seeking to stay close to God. He is highly disciplined in keeping spiritual disciplines, especially daily devotional times. In the last five years “relational-spiritual friendship” has become increasingly important in his spiritual walk.

Even with this high level of spiritual discipline in his life, Billy is quick to say that he has endured in ministry “only by the Grace of God!” He avoids burnout by recognizing there are certain aspects of ministry that are depleting, and guarding against doing too much of that work; making sure he does enough of the work that is fulfilling. He sees this as one of the ways he stays true to his calling. His five-year reflection is very helpful in this.

Learning how to say “no” is another way of staying true to his calling. He says this has been a difficult thing to learn and labels himself, “a recovering people pleaser.” Establishing boundaries to maintain healthy relationships with the congregation has also kept him from reaching the point that he ends up resenting God’s people instead of loving, caring, and leading them. He has been intentional in developing safe

⁷ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 21-29.

relationships with people outside the congregation; primarily his hunting buddies. He has also developed a relationship with an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor in the area, whom he identifies as his “Father Confessor.” He identifies his love for recreation as a healthy antidote to burnout.

Billy sees himself more as a dependable pastor than a visionary leader. He knows that his preaching and leadership may inspire vision. It is then his role to encourage and empower people to act on their vision.

For determining priorities he works with the session in establishing a job description and setting goals. The job description is something that is evolving, but the changes are communicated with and then agreed upon by the session. The session is also involved in developing the goals, sustaining the goals, advancing the goals, and ultimately reaching the agreed upon goals.

There is much less formality in determining boundaries. Billy is not big on external boundaries. He prefers to rely on and learn from his past experience. He admits that he is not perfect in this area, but believes he is making progress. After 10 years his session trusts his judgment in establishing his own boundaries. If he has a question in an area dealing with an ethical boundary he’ll do a pride/humility check, do some sober reflection, check in with his “father confessor”, and trust in God’s grace.

Eugene Peterson uses the word “subversive” to describe how pastors are to be counter-cultural.⁸ Billy does see himself, using Peterson’s understanding, as subversive/counter-cultural. In his teaching/preaching he does speak out against the worldly/North American values that are contrary to scripture. One specific example is in premarital counseling he speaks strongly against premarital sex.

⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

In *Courageous Leadership* Bill Hybels speaks of the church being the hope for the world.⁹ The implication is that the church needs to do what it does, but do it better. Eugene Peterson in *The Contemplative Pastor* says of the role of the church is to “introduce another world.”¹⁰ While there are aspects of these views that are complementary, they are significantly different perspectives on what the church should be and do. In relation to these two views Billy does not chose one versus the other, but takes a “both and” approach. His model of the church is a “bless and add” model. Bless what has been done and is worthy and add to that. He spoke of a rhythm to the ministry of his congregation that is presenting another world, while at the same time bringing the hope that the church has historically brought to individuals and communities.

Billy shared that within his congregation people are eager to pray. “Everything begins with devotion and prayer.” There are people that prefer that he “lead them in prayer”, but for the most part prayer is something that they enter into together.

Peterson laments the improper use of language by pastors, and feels that using language correctly is an important role of the pastor.¹¹ Billy, while admitting that we all make mistakes, agrees with Peterson in both the lament and the pastor’s responsibility to use language correctly, carefully, and creatively.

Peterson values patience, worship, confronting evil, and developing faithfulness. In contrast Hybels and Borden seem to place more value in results. On a spectrum between these values Billy places himself closer to Peterson. This author believes the perception of most people in the presbytery of Billy would be the opposite.

⁹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 15.

¹⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 34.

¹¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 46.

Peterson speaks of the tension between “the running of the church” and “the cure of souls.”¹² When asked how he keeps this tension in balance Billy responded that he did not think the two are in opposition to one another. The goal setting he does with the session helps him to keep things on track in providing care, comfort, encouragement and inspiration for people while also maintaining the “running of the church.” He did say that, “you can’t just cure souls, things will fall apart.”

He does see prevenience¹³ as a huge factor in his style of ministry. He finds it freeing to know that every situation he becomes involved in God has already been at work, is at work, and will continue working long after his involvement has ceased. Even with his appreciation of prevenience he still sees his role in ministry as active.

His preaching focuses on relationship with God: not only knowing about God, but knowing God. Both are indispensable. Billy confessed that he does not preach or teach on prayer as much as he should.

He sees growth within the people of his congregation happening slowly, “in ten year increments.” He knows the slow growth can be frustrating, but that rapid growth is usually a sign of rocky soil and often leads to disappointment. He has learned to work with the slow growth and look for the fruit that it bears.

He has found it tough but important to maintain a balance in what people expect of him and who he believes God has called him to be. He doesn’t think these need to be antithetical. By God’s grace he takes this day-by-day, season-by-season. Finding this balance is one way he combats the idolatry of the pastor. When asked about other ways, he replied, “their names are legion.” This author took that to mean that he sees the

¹² Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

¹³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 60.

idolatry of the pastor as a real evil and it is only God's divine power that keeps it under control.

When asked if he had ever had or would like a sabbatical, and what his elders would think of the idea, he replied that he had had a 2 ½ week long sabbatical and would like to have one that is a month long. This author thinks a 2 ½ week long sabbatical is a study leave and not much of a sabbatical and probably indicates that the elders would not be in favor of a sabbatical of any significant length of time.

Reverend Richard Kellet

The Reverend Dick Kellet has recently retired from pastoring the First Presbyterian Church of Northumberland, PA.¹⁴ He was ordained and installed to that pastorate on November 1, 1964 and he retired from that pastorate on November 1, 2009; forty-five years of serving one congregation. This situation points to some unique leadership characteristics/dynamics. This author wondered how Dick's responses would compare to those of the other participants? They were much more matter of fact. There was a sense of completion in his statements, much less "from where I've been, where I am, and think I'm going" much more "this is how I did it." This author finds this curious because on the surface Dick would appear to be the most humble, the most gentle of the five. Not that he is not humble and gentle, he is, but in contrast to the others his answers were surprisingly blunt.

He considers himself a good leader, though he can't identify a time that he became aware of his leadership abilities or came to the realization that he is a good leader, he "never really thought about it." His longevity would indicate that he is not a leader that offends or burns bridges, but is a leader people can work with over a long

¹⁴ Interviewed Dick Kellet, interviewed by author, Lewisburg, PA, November 9, 2009.

period of time. The Reverend James H. Brown significantly influenced his leadership style. In the 1960s Rev. Brown pastored the Presbyterian Church in Upper Octorora, PA, just outside of Philadelphia. During his time there was a significant renewal movement that radiated beyond the local congregation, throughout the greater Delaware Valley.

Dick considered preaching and teaching the Word of God as his top leadership responsibility. This is consistent with his reputation within the presbytery; he is not identified as “energetic” or “dynamic”, but as one who holds closely to God’s Word. As pastor he saw himself more as a shepherd than a leader or a visionary. This would be consistent with his pastorate, which would best be characterized as steady, caring, and consistent. During his tenure his congregation grew in their participation in church life, participation within the presbytery, worship attendance, and giving, but the number of members did not change significantly during his five decades of leadership.

During his 45-year tenure levels of accountability to the session would ebb and flow. There were seasons, especially early on, when he felt highly accountable to the session. The longer he was there, the more relaxed the accountability became. When asked how accountable he felt to the session toward the end of his tenure his answer was an ambivalent, “somewhat.”

As was indicated in chapter one, *Hit the Bullseye*, by Paul Borden, was not well received within the presbytery. Dick thought the book was “alright.” He saw points of validity, but he also saw how it could make some pastors defensive and why they would have problems with its methodology. For him, personally it did not have much of an impact, because of where he was in his ministry. After forty years he was not going to radically change how he was doing ministry, nor was his congregation going to radically

change while he was there. Dick thought the accountability aspects of the book had some merit, but could be “overblown.” He would have preferred that pastors and congregations be dealt with more on a case-by-case basis than by a broad policy. He felt that there are more complex factors going on within any congregation and the relationship between pastor and congregation.

Dick believes God is concerned with both faithfulness and fruitfulness, and didn’t think you can measure one against the other. He did say, that if forced he would say that God is more concerned with faithfulness than He is with fruitfulness. This is contrary to *Hit the Bullseye*¹⁵, but is what this author expected to be the answer of someone who had served in the capacity Dick has. He doesn’t think the aggressive leadership style the book advocated would work presbytery wide, but did believe it could be effective in certain circumstances within particular congregations.

The biblical leader Dick most identifies with is the Apostle Paul, because of Paul’s willingness to speak the truth, commitment to Christ, and willingness to pay the cost. This author sees consistency in Dick’s identification with Paul and his reputation within the presbytery as one who is committed to Christ and willing to communicate his convictions no matter what the cost.

In his pastorate Dick felt he balanced his time between caring for the needy, equipping lay leaders and leading the congregation. He believes that the vitality of a congregation is related to the quality of pastoral leadership, at least to some degree. He was hesitant to say how much of a factor he thought the pastoral leadership was in the vitality of a congregation.

¹⁵ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

Dick did see the vision for the direction of the congregation to be one of his key roles/responsibilities as pastor. He believes that the pastor has a greater responsibility in this area than any member of the congregation. He believes the pastor has the responsibility in creating the vision and then communicating the vision first to the session (either gathered or individually) and then to the congregation through preaching.

The reputation of the Northumberland church and Dick's legacy is that the membership is filled with great givers. Their giving per member is among the highest in the presbytery.¹⁶ The Northumberland Congregation's significant and faithful giving can't be attributed to anything other than the longevity of Dick's pastorate and his consistent preaching on stewardship. He shared that when he first started the congregation was below average in their giving, but through the years that began to change, and over the decades faithful, biblical giving became a part of the culture of the congregation. He did see himself as the chief fundraiser. In the early years it was out of necessity. He never made any effort to approach people of means for any special or particular gifts. He simply preached what he understood to be the biblical model of Christian stewardship, "I have never been timid in teaching what the Bible says." He would simply lay it all out for the people, encourage them to pray about it, and then respond as they felt led by God.

In his ministry Dick did not give much thought or effort to developing future leaders. He was more concerned with discipling; nurturing people in their faith. He felt that whatever leadership abilities they had would become clear as they matured in their faith.

¹⁶ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, www.pcusa.org/research/presbytery/tenyeartrends/2008/496/Table_11.pdf (accessed November 12, 2009).

As for who saw leadership potential in him? Just prior to going to college, he was attending a revival at the Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church, a woman, he never got her name, came to him and told him that he would “give his life to Jesus and be a pastor.” At the moment the lady’s words seemed like “the strangest thing I had ever heard.” He did come to faith and after college went to seminary. While on breaks from seminary he would go home and meet with Rev. Brown. The meetings were a regular part of his preparation for ministry, they were informal times of talking, counseling, studying scriptures and discussing recommended reading.

A number of those Dick has discipled have gone into fulltime ministry. One is a pastor within the denomination, several are pastors in other denominations, and one is a Commissioned Lay Pastor, Bob Reich, who is a part of this project.

Dick’s style of leadership is primarily by example and very informal. He seeks to model a Christian lifestyle in such a way that it inspires others in their walk. Two significant aspects of this lifestyle are patience and humility. He believes these reflect a trust and reliance on God. Dick also uses encouragement as a significant ingredient in his leadership. Encouraging others in their walk, their growth, and their struggles. It has been his experience that an encouraging word given at the right time in the right circumstance can make a significant impact.

In Dick’s decision making process prayer and scripture reading are what he relies upon most. He makes sure that he takes the time to pray, study the scriptures in their proper context, and be still before God prior to making any significant decisions. He relies heavily on the leading of the Holy Spirit. He asks himself, “What does God want me to do or be done?” He makes sure that his perception of God’s will is more

significant than “practical factors.” He does find it helpful to be in open conversation with the elders, especially a couple whose wisdom and Biblical knowledge he admires, but he confessed that the feedback from the elders was rarely a “determining factor” in making decisions. Neither was past experience. This author found Dick’s responses on this subject surprising, but found them consistent with his reflection that he considers himself a risk taker.

Dick’s first response when being asked how good he was at managing himself was, “Terrible, not really.” When addressing specific aspects of self-management it became clear that his perception was that throughout his career he had managed himself very well. He had managed to stay true to his calling, his vision, and his passion. He believes that he utilized his spiritual gifts well and maintained a consistent character, and paced himself well. When the topic of managing his pride came up he mentioned a specific incident. Seven years into his pastorate the Holy Spirit “dealt” with him concerning his pride. Ever since then he believes he has been “more aware of my humility than most, if that doesn’t sound prideful.”

Early on in his ministry the elders may have been concerned about his self-management and “were probably more hands on” in managing him. Over time, after he had established his work habits, the elders trusted him to manage himself and were uninvolved in his management.

The ingredients that grew Dick as a leader were things he had read, attending seminars and retreats. He attributed his long relationship with a Spiritual Director as a primary aspect in his leadership development. The Spiritual Director did not mentor him

as a leader, rather it was Dick's perception and reflection that the director drew out of him what contributed to his growth as a leader.

When asked what he used to stay close to God, Dick identified three from the list¹⁷: reading devotional material, relationships, and serving. In the serving, he specifically mentioned serving on the leadership team for Tres Dias weekends.

Dick attributes his longevity and his ability to endure to his realizing that he wasn't God; that everything was not dependant on him, it was all in God's hands. He also credited his ability to say no as a contributing factor. He was able to say no by realizing what the Lord wanted him to do. This realization also helped him stay true to his calling. He also has a network of supportive and safe relationships that helped guide and encourage him in ministry. That network is made up of his Spiritual Director, neighboring clergy, and a group of clergy couples from outside the area that he and his wife meet with semi-annually. The clergy couples call their group their "Light Group", and they had a covenant of honesty and encouragement. He also regularly participated in recreation, tennis and other sports: not too much, but enough.

Reflecting back upon his career he believes his legacy is more as a dependable pastor than a visionary leader. This author agrees with his belief, Dick is known for his stability, as unflappable. He shared that he always sought to be obedient to God and let his time in prayer and his study of the scriptures determine his priorities and his boundaries. His elders did not play a significant role in making these determinations, but they did give their approval.

Dick agrees with Peterson's call for pastors to be "subversive."¹⁸ He believes that he was willing to, and did when felt called to, speak against troubling elements or

¹⁷ Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 21-29.

directions within the current culture. Even though he acknowledges that he was a “dependable pastor”¹⁹ he does see that his call was to introduce another world, not simply do a better job at what the church has historically done.²⁰

In praying with people Dick would seek to both lead them in prayer and encourage them to pray, and be honest in their prayers and not try to make it sound right for the pastor. This author finds the “encouraging people to be honest in their prayers”, a great insight. It was Dick’s experience that over the years he found himself doing less leading people in prayer and more leading them in the hard work of prayer. Even though he encouraged people to not worry about their prayer “sounding right” it was important to Dick that he use language correctly in both his writing and public speaking.

On the spectrum of patience versus results Dick places himself more on the patience end of the spectrum. This seems consistent with his pastorate where the numerical growth was often nonexistent, but there was slow, clear growth/change taking place in people’s lives. In dealing with the tension between the running of the church and “the cure of souls”²¹ the latter was always more important to him than the former.

Prevenience was a big part of Dick’s perspective on ministry. He quoted “He who began a good work in you . . .” as foundational in his understanding of his role in what God was doing in someone’s life. He further carried his understanding of the doctrine by seeing his role in ministry as more middle voice than active or passive.

¹⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

¹⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 2.

²⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 27.

²¹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

One of the primary themes in Dick's preaching was one's relationship with God. He often used the language of relationship with God. He felt that he preached on prayer "enough", but his primary theme in his preaching was on relationship with God.

In his ministry when looking for growth in people's spiritual lives he looked for changes in attitude; in the way people looked at or approached things. He looked at what issues were of concern to them, their commitment of time to the Lord: their priorities. Growth in these areas in the people he knew was more important than new people coming to the church.

In combating the temptation of the "idolatry of the pastor" Dick always made it clear that he was not their Savior. He proclaimed, "Together we seek to follow Him." He was intentional in not encouraging the idolatry, and never took people's praise of him too seriously. He sought to serve and please God not those he encountered in his ministry. This helped him maintain a balance between what the people expected of him and who he believed God called him to be. He always realized that he was responding to "the Lord's call", not to please people.

Dick did have one sabbatical. After 25 years he took a 6-month sabbatical. The session and the laity were totally in favor of it. He felt that it renewed and refreshed both the congregation and him and enabled him to serve that congregation for another 20 years. Without the sabbatical he doesn't think he would have stayed with the Northumberland congregation for his entire career.

Reverend Stephen Shirk

Steve Shirk has been the pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Milton, PA for 14 years.²² He portrays a calm demeanor that reflects his experience and his faith. He is highly respected within the presbytery. He considers himself an adequate leader, acknowledging that he is not a “natural leader.” Leadership is something at which he works hard and in which he is still not entirely comfortable.

The person who has most influenced Steve’s leadership style is Stephen Covey. He has read all his books and even seen him speak. He relies heavily upon the principles within Covey’s teaching and reviews them regularly.

Steve first became aware of his leadership abilities when he was in college and was a Young Life leader. He developed a Young Life club ministry that drew over a 100 kids to the weekly meetings. Steve loves what he is doing now, but shared that the times in ministry when he felt most comfortable and fulfilled were when he was a Young Life leader and when he was a Youth Director for a congregation. In his current position he sees his top leadership responsibilities as preaching, managing staff, moderating the session, and demonstrating/living the gospel.

He identifies himself more as a shepherd than a visionary. In his Young Life and Youth Director days he was more of a visionary, growing ministries. Now in more of a shepherding role he is more concerned with maintaining and shepherding those under his care than he is in growing new ministries.

Steve sees himself as highly accountable to the session; to this author it seems Steve feels much more accountable to the session than the other participants in this project. He thought the ideas in the book *Hit the Bullseye*, by Paul Borden were great.

²² Interviewed Stephen Shirk, interviewed by author, Lewisburg, PA, December 8, 2009.

He wished the presbytery had implemented many of the aspects within the book. He thought the accountability and the policy of “participate in our programs or you will not pastor another congregation within the district”²³ were terrifying, but practical and ultimately helpful. He understood the presbytery’s negative reaction to these ideas within the book, they made him uncomfortable and defensive too. Yet he still thought they had merit.

Steve agrees with the idea that God is as equally interested in fruitfulness as He is in faithfulness.²⁴ He believes that within the presbytery there is more value placed on faithfulness than on fruitfulness. Steve was quick to point out that there are many Biblical examples of people faithfully following God, doing His will, and not bearing fruit. The prophets being the most obvious example of this: if they were judged on how the people responded to their declarations, most would be judged failures. As much as Steve agrees with many of the concepts within *Hit the Bullseye*, he does not think the presbytery needs that aggressive style of leadership. He believes the presbytery needs to take the positive elements and adapt them for small town America and apply them with grace.

The Biblical leader Steve most identifies with is Joseph. Like Joseph, Steve knows he has been given many gifts and abilities. He has had success. He is a favorite son. He is well liked. He has also had plenty of suffering in his life, yet he knows he is still greatly blessed.

²³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 35.

²⁴ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

There have been seasons when Steve has spent a disproportionate amount of time and energy being the “chaplain to the needy”²⁵ rather than equipping lay leaders and leading the congregation. In his first ten years in Milton he felt like he had a disproportionate amount of funerals, which led to much ministering to the needy. In the past four years the amount of funerals has decreased and allowed him more time to lead and to equip leaders.

He believes that the vitality of a congregation is related to the quality of pastoral leadership. He has experienced this in his congregation when his leadership has been energetic and strong the congregation has responded positively. There have also been times when he has struggled in his leadership and energy and the congregation has responded negatively.

He knows that vision for the direction of the congregation needs to be one of his key roles/responsibilities, but effectively it has not been. He sees himself more as a dependable pastor than a visionary leader. He would like to be more of a visionary, but says he has been “too busy surviving.”

In communicating vision Steve starts with the session as a whole. This is a departure from the other pastors of this project who generally start with individual elders or other key leaders in the congregation before sharing their vision with the session. After sharing with the session Steve communicates his vision to the congregation through preaching and teaching. He finds that referring to or recommending a particular book that was the catalyst for his vision is a good step in the right direction. Steve was quick to comment that his congregation is often strongly resistant to vision or change and that it

²⁵ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 71.

can be a very slow process to get them to the point of even beginning to consider what he is communicating.

Steve does not see himself as the chief resources/fund raiser for the congregation²⁶, and does not feel adequately prepared to be a fundraiser. This author finds Steve's responses surprising considering he has been with his congregation for 14 years. This author would have anticipated that during his tenure Steve would have come to the conclusion that if the pastor doesn't take the lead in fundraising, there is no one leading the fundraising. Hybels clearly presents this reality in *Courageous Leadership*; one of the books Steve identified as being very significant in influencing his leadership style. Steve did say that he is bold in preaching on tithing and Biblical stewardship in all areas of life.

In developing future leaders Steve has a small group that meets on Sunday nights. This gathering has evolved into a time of developing future leaders. In this group and beyond it Steve does spend a fair amount of time investing in the development of future leaders.

Steve's leadership potential was first seen and expressed to him by an Area Director for Young Life. While in college Steve volunteered with Young Life, the Area Director saw Steve's leadership abilities and built a mentoring relationship with Steve. This relationship has evolved into a friendship that is still very important to Steve. Following college Steve took a job as the Youth Director at Oreland Presbyterian Church, outside of Philadelphia. He was in that position for 14 years, had a large and vibrant program that he still looks back on as his most successful season of ministry. From that

²⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 93.

youth program over 50 kids have grown up and gone into fulltime ministry. Steve sees this as his greatest accomplishment in ministry.

He has adopted the “Ronald Regan leadership style; surround yourself with talented people and empower them to live up to their abilities.” This author senses a frustration in Steve as he says this. It seems as if in his youth ministry days he had talented volunteer leadership and youth, but in his current congregation the level of talent isn’t what he would like.

His decision making process relies heavily on the input of others; it also involves prayer, scripture study, experience, and gut/intuition. He sees the Holy Spirit working through all these elements to guide and direct him. Steve does not see himself as much of a risk taker, “not as much as I should be.”

Steve does believe he has a good handle on managing himself. He is good at staying true to his calling. He believes he is at 70-75% of where he should be in managing his vision for the congregation. He sees the “lack of kids at church” as evidence of this shortcoming. He thinks his passion is where it ought to be, but that his utilization of his spiritual gifts would be best if he focused more on his passion for youth ministry and did more with music and kids. He feels he has a strong character, which is good because pride is his biggest challenge. In pacing himself he thinks he is fair to good and admits, “There have been times I felt I could do more.” It has been Steve’s experience that the elders see him as someone who does very well at managing himself. Consequently they do not spend much time or effort concerning themselves with how he manages his time.

To keep himself growing Steve is working on his Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. His studies have been exactly what he was looking for. They have inspired him, challenged him, and motivated him. He is experiencing the professional growth he was looking for.

Steve utilizes traditional spiritual disciplines to stay close to God: daily devotionals, studying the scriptures, prayer, and solitude. Steve, like Dick, has been heavily involved in Tres Dias, and believes his continued involvement has been instrumental in keeping him close to God. Other elements that keep him close to God are intellectual stimulation and relational interaction focused on theological matters, his D.Min. program has provided great opportunities in these areas.

In the past two years Steve has discovered something that has given him energy, perseverance, been a great stress reducer, given him time to reflect, help him lose weight and get fit. Exercise, specifically running has become an integral part of Steve's life. He has worked up to running five miles a day: 3 miles in the morning and 2 more miles in the late afternoon or early evening. He credits his running with saving his ministry, giving him a fresh perspective, and opening up new relationships within and outside the congregation. He believes his ministry would have disintegrated if he had not started running. He is healthier: psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Runners within the congregation connect with him in a new way and he has developed some running friendships with people outside of the congregation. He enjoys these friendships, but does not think he has ever really had the need to develop safe relationships. He regularly runs in 5k races with running buddies, from both inside and outside the congregation.

Another area of his life where Steve is growing is in the ability to say “no.” He knows that, like most pastors, he is by nature a people pleaser and has a hard time saying “no.” He has grown to the point where he now sees himself as “adequate” at saying “no.” He doesn’t know if he will ever be good at saying “no”, but knows there is room for improvement.

Boundaries have never been a problem for Steve; he has always had strong boundaries, though they were not established through training and experience, but are more intuitive. Setting priorities has been a greater challenge. He admits that too often the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and this frequently distracts him from establishing and sticking to priorities. Steve’s elders feel that he has done a good job of establishing priorities and boundaries, though they have not been involved in determining them.

Steve does not agree with Peterson’s call for pastors to be subversive and counter-cultural,²⁷ nor does he see himself as being either of these. He more closely identifies with Hybels’ view of doing a better job of what the church already does than he does with Peterson’s view of introducing “another world.”²⁸

In praying with people Steve has been very intentional in teaching his leaders to pray with others. Whether he leads people in prayer or leads them in the hard work of prayer depends on the person. Most of the time it is praying for them rather than with them.

Steve is not overly concerned with using language correctly. He attributes this to his starting as a youth speaker. Being a youth speaker did teach him to be creative in how he communicates the gospel. This author is surprised that Steve doesn’t put much

²⁷ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

²⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 34.

thought or effort into the correct use of language, because this author knows Steve to be well read and has not heard him use language incorrectly.

When contrasting Peterson's view of the pastor (practicing patience, leading people to worship God, dealing with evil, and developing faithfulness)²⁹ versus Hybels and Bordon and their results orientation Steve sees himself line up much more with Peterson. He is also much more interested in "the cure of souls" than he is in running the church³⁰. Prevenience is a huge factor in his style of ministry, though he sees his role in ministry as more active than passive or middle voice.

In his preaching Steve uses the language of relationship with God every week and feels that he preaches and teaches on prayer a "fair amount." He sees individual spiritual growth in his congregation through the way they share anecdotes: their understanding of God or seeing God's hand in more varied situations, both good and bad. He sees corporate growth in how they collectively respond to situations or circumstances.

Maintaining balance between what the people expect of him and whom he believes God has called him to be is an up and down battle, sometimes easy, sometimes difficult. At the time of the interview Steve felt there was congruence. When addressing how to combat the danger of the idolatry of the pastor, he laughs out loud. "I am not successful enough for that to be a factor."

Steve does not think the idea of a sabbatical would ever fly with his session or the congregation. He has never really considered it, and he isn't sure he'd want one.

²⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 48.

³⁰ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

Commissioned Lay Pastor Robert Reich

Bob Reich is a retired banker.³¹ He was an elder of the Northumberland Presbyterian Church. He showed leadership as an elder and as an Adult Sunday School teacher. With Dick Kellet's encouragement he went through the training to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor. Upon completion of his training Bob was commissioned to serve the Mountain Presbyterian Church. The Mountain church is located in the midst of rolling farmland, 5 miles south of the nearest town, Sunbury. Bob has been the CLP of the Mountain church for 11 years; under his leadership the congregation is thriving.³²

Bob considers himself a good leader. One of the reasons he entered into the CLP program was he felt called to use his leadership gifts and experience to serve God rather than have it be dormant in his retirement. The one who first saw leadership abilities in Bob and mentored him was his first boss, Dr. R.C. Hammond, a veterinarian. Bob said, "He recognized leadership abilities in me that I didn't see. He fired me because he found me another job that would exercise my leadership abilities." Bob has great appreciation for Dr. Hammond's affirming influence in his life.

The impact of Dr. Hammond on Bob's life can be seen in what Bob considers his top leadership responsibilities; identifying talent and mentoring their giftedness. Bob is known in the presbytery for his mentoring and encouragement. Through his experience in the business world he has had a number of mentoring relationships with young pastors in the presbytery. He helps them identify and confirm their gifts and encourages them to "put them to use."

³¹ Interviewed Robert Reich, interviewed by author, Lewisburg, PA, February 2, 2010.

³² General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913B/> (Accessed February 10, 2010).

He does not see himself as a visionary, “too much of a banker for that.” He identifies himself as a shepherd / leader. When asked if he is more of a visionary or a dependable pastor, his response is immediate, “Dependable Pastor.” He feels highly accountable to the session. He likes accountability, is accustomed to being accountable to both a board and to share holders, and believes that in general there needs to be more accountability from pastor to session and congregation.

Bob found the book *Hit the Bullseye*, by Paul Borden to be helpful. It helped him to sort out certain issues in his leadership. The accountability aspect of the book resonated with him. He disagreed with the policy that a pastor who did not participate in their programs could not receive another call in the region.³³ He thought it lacked grace, was too broad, and not personal enough. He doesn't think the presbytery needs that aggressive style of leadership.

When asked if he thought God is equally interested in fruitfulness as He is in faithfulness³⁴, Bob responded that God is interested in relationship. For him this must always come first, if we lose sight of this we lose our way. This author found this to be a fascinating answer, especially coming from Bob, not one of the other four in this project.

The Biblical leader Bob most identifies with is Joshua, because he learned from a great leader. Bob credits Dick Kellet in helping him grow in Christian knowledge and spiritual maturity. Bob identified with Joshua's heart that was turned toward God, which enabled him to be quick to repent when he messed up. Another leadership characteristic that Bob identified with was Joshua's declaration, “As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord.” Bob sees Joshua as a great leader, trusting in God, yet so human.

³³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 35.

³⁴ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

At one point in his ministry Bob did feel like he was spending a disproportionate amount of time and energy being the “chaplain to the needy.”³⁵ He made some adjustments to how he responded to people, established some new patterns and no longer spends so much time caring for the needy and has the time and energy to lead the congregation and equip lay leaders.

Bob does believe the vitality of a congregation is very much related to the quality of pastoral leadership. Over the past 11 years, with his committed leadership, he has seen the Mountain church transform from what was a sleepy little church with a turnstile at the pulpit to a vibrant and growing church filled with people that are growing in their faith and making a difference in the lives of others.

An aspect of his leadership is vision. He sees the vision for the direction of the congregation to be one of his key roles/responsibilities. He communicates his vision first to session. Then as he communicates the vision to the congregation he makes sure that he includes that the session shares his vision. Bob thinks it is imperative that the session share the vision and that the congregation knows that the session is on board.

Bob does not see himself as the chief resource (fund) raiser for the congregation.³⁶ On numerous occasions Bob has shared with this author his perception that the congregation would strongly object to a “stewardship sermon.” Bob is, however, bold in approaching people of means about giving and bold in teaching and preaching on giving in general. He is more comfortable promoting special giving to a special project outside

³⁵ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 71.

³⁶ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 93.

the church than within. In his time at the Mountain church the giving has risen dramatically.³⁷

Bob estimates that he invests about ten percent of his time and energy in developing future leaders. Because of his own experience this is an area close to his heart. When he becomes aware of a person's giftedness he seeks to gain a full understanding of the skill mix and then place them in positions where they can contribute using their gifts and abilities, stretching them a little, and affirming their success. Bob identifies two leaders in the congregation that have grown as a direct result of a mentoring relationship with him. One, a trustee that has grown from a business person willing to lend his knowledge to the congregation to a Christian who sees his service on the board of the trustees as a part of his witness and good stewardship. The other, an adult Sunday school teacher who Bob has walked with through the death of the teacher's wife and his return to ministry; stronger and closer to God because of what he has been through.

Bob identifies his leadership style as relational. With all his experience he still says, "I have a passion to learn new and creative ways to enhance my own leadership skills. God has enabled me to integrate my experience in my banking career into my leadership within the church. I try to create opportunities for people to thrive under my leadership. In my banking career I watched people I mentored move to positions higher than mine and found that very rewarding. This author saw in Bob zeal for growing in leadership and mentoring others that was not present in the others in this project.

³⁷ General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (USA) Ten Year Trends Statistical Report, http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/report/JBF913B/contributions.jsp?format=bar_graph (Accessed February 10, 2010).

In his decision making Bob considers himself a risk taker; he sees the Holy Spirit at work through the whole process. He studies scriptures, specifically from Proverbs. He knows that proverbs are more general wisdom than guidance for specific circumstances, but he still finds tremendous value in their wisdom. Bob solicits the input of three men he has been in a prayer group with for a couple of decades; he also relies on other clergy who may have more experience on certain matters. Past experience is a “major, major” factor in his decision-making. He spends significant time in prayer. Then he makes his decision and, while he is not opposed to reviewing his decision, he moves forward. He has observed that many people make up their mind, but fail to act on their decision.

Bob believes he is fairly good at managing himself, though he was quick to admit that it can be a struggle because sometimes ministry encroaches on family time. In general he is true to his calling, vision, and passion. His utilization of his spiritual gifts comes from a love to contribute out of his years of experience and giftedness. Bob knows that he has a strong character, hopes that he has his pride under control with his family and church family, and is good at pacing himself. His elders are more concerned with Bob’s pacing than he is. They are always expressing concern that he is being overwhelmed. It is this author’s experience that Bob has more energy than most people and is highly efficient in what he does. He is able to accomplish much more than someone with average ability and energy.

Bob sees his spiritual life as the key component to his growing as a leader. He desires a deeper intimacy with God, spending more time in his daily devotions, taking more time to contemplate the ways of God. Worship is a significant part of his staying

close to God. He has a hunger for good Godly teaching. He spends time going on walks, listening for God in the still small voice.

Bob attributes his endurance on having a diversity of interests aside from ministry. These other interests help him avoid burnout. At the same time he attributes his focus for staying true to his calling. He begins preparing for his sermons three months in advance. He then works through the text in the weeks leading up to the sermon. He ends up excited every week with what God is doing in his life and the privilege it is to share that through preaching. This author believes it is this advanced preparation rather than his diversity of interests that is the primary factor in keeping Bob from burnout. Another factor is his ability to say “no.” He says he learned this the hard way, by saying yes too often. Now he thinks he has found balance in when to say “yes” and when to say “no.”

Bob, because of his business career, has many safe relationships. His former business associates know and respect him, they tend to have an appreciation for what he is now doing. He also has a group of men he has been meeting and praying with for over 25 years. They are close and have a high level of trust with one another. They can safely share with one another, counsel one another, and when necessary confront and hold one another accountable.

Bob establishes his boundaries and priorities through planning. He is highly disciplined in planning out his week, leaving flexibility for whatever comes along. The greatest challenge has been establishing boundaries to safeguard family time. These boundaries and the planning that establishes them is entirely up to Bob, the session is not involved in this at all. They do express concern that he is doing too much.

Bob does not see himself as subversive. He was successful in living out his faith and having a successful secular career, so he is more about encouraging transition and transformation than he is about calling for a whole new way of living. Along these lines he doesn't see his role in the church as introducing Peterson's "another world".³⁸ He is more focused on the church doing a better job of being the church.

In praying with people Bob seeks to meet them where they are. If he senses they expect him to pray then that is what he does. If he knows they are comfortable praying with him then it is more of a time of "praying with one another." It depends on who they are.

Bob's priorities in using language correctly, creatively, and carefully are very interesting. For the congregation he serves he seeks to keep the language at a sixth grade level. He estimates that 30% of the elderly within his congregation have only a sixth grade level of education. So, though careful to use language correctly, he keeps it simple.

In the spectrum with Eugene Peterson's practicing patience at one end and Hybel's and Borden's results oriented approach to ministry at the other end Bob sees himself halfway between. He tries to be patient with people, but he does want people to move, grow, and seek change in their lives. He encourages people to not just wait upon the Lord, but to move in faith.

Pastoring a small church Bob does all the administrative work, other than the money. It can be difficult to balance the running of the church and "the cure of souls."³⁹ He thinks he does a good job; the "cure of souls" always takes priority.

³⁸ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 34.

³⁹ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

Bob sees prevenience as a huge factor in his style of ministry. He never forgets that he did not begin the work, nor will he see it to completion. Ministry is always a work in progress. There are times when he realizes God wants him to initiate, other times when he knows God simply wants him to observe and most of the time it is a combination of the two.

Prayer is a frequent sermon topic in Bob's preaching. More than that though he intertwines prayer into the service. The language of relationship with God is used frequently throughout the service.

Bob sees members of his congregation growing in their faith primarily through an increased interest and involvement in Christian Education. More and more people are asking for special Bible studies. Their appetite for Christian study is growing.

In dealing with people's expectations he constantly tries to point people to God and get the attention off of himself. His organization and planning also help him to make sure that he is keeping things in balance, living up to realistic expectations and not succumbing to the tyranny of the urgent.

This author was very interested to know what this businessman turned pastor and the congregation with a significant number with only a sixth grade level of education thought about sabbaticals. Bob said that he is thinking about a three month sabbatical in 2011, after 12 years of ministry. The elders and laity are excited about it too.

Reverend Dr. George Oliver Wagner

Ollie Wagner served the Montourville Presbyterian church for eight years.⁴⁰ He started as their Stated Supply Pastor and then was voted by a super majority of the

⁴⁰ George Oliver Wagner, written interview May 2, 2010, phone interview May 11, 2010.

presbytery to be their Installed Pastor. Ollie left Montoursville in May of 2008 to take a call at the Alpharetta Church in Georgia.

Ollie considers himself a leader. His leadership style has been most greatly influenced by people whose leadership he has observed. A few examples: a loving Krislund Camp (a Presbyterian camp jointly owned by Northumberland, Huntington, and Carlisle presbyteries) counselor when he was a youth; some of his best coaches (they weren't all good!) from childhood and school year sports, some college and seminary professors and staff, since being ordained, there are other clergy whose fellowship, advice and example have been helpful to him. In total, too many to count. He became aware of his leadership abilities through his experiences as a child—academic, social, church, athletic...all of which seemed to land him in positions of leadership. That continued into college.

While serving the Montoursville congregation he considered his top leadership responsibility to be helping the congregation discern God's call and live faithfully toward it, implementing it. He views himself more as a shepherd—attending to relationships and providing care and direction to those in his life whether congregants, kids on the soccer team he coaches, or his own children. He reflected that he spent equal time and energy in the roles of Visionary Leader and Dependable Shepherd.

He tried to be accountable to the session, but didn't necessarily feel accountable to them. He found that often he needed to challenge them and ask them to stretch beyond their comfort zone. He felt accountable to God and God's call on his life. In terms of his work, he looked to the Personnel committee to help him gauge "are things going well?" and "are we on the same page?"

When it came to the book *Hit the Bullseye*, by Paul Borden, Ollie felt the accountability structures outlined in the book had some merit, but he pushes back on “too much focus on numbers.” Still, he thinks moving toward that direction of accountability is better than the other extreme. In short: good insights, but he had some hesitations. In addressing the matter of the being moved out if a pastor didn’t accept the judicatory’s involvement⁴¹ Ollie has seen this happen. He thinks pastor, presbytery and congregation should mutually discern “moving out or on”. This is where “pastor’s reviews” have been helpful to him so he knows whether the congregation (on the whole) feels like things are working or not. He doesn’t think the presbytery has enough intimate knowledge of the particular congregation to understand the spirit of things very well.

He likes the combination of God being concerned with both faithfulness and fruitfulness.⁴² Ollie believes one brings the other- at least in quality if not always in quantity. Thinking of Jesus’ vine, branches and bearing good fruit imagery is helpful to him. Like the mustard seed or yeast, the kingdom is about growth and increase. Ollie thought *Hit the Bullseye* focused too much on accountability. Rather than accountability, he would like to see the Presbytery play the role of helping to better resource pastors and congregations so they will grow in faithfulness and fruitful harvest.

The Biblical leader Ollie most identifies with is Jesus: faithful to the Father’s will, self-giving service to those in need. Courage, love in word and deed. He also relates to Jonah and the Disciples who fail as much as they succeed! This author does find it interesting that Ollie was the only one to mention Jesus as the biblical leader they identify with, though Billy did mention Jesus as leader he models for his leadership.

⁴¹ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 35.

⁴² Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 36.

At one time Ollie found himself spending a disproportionate amount of time and energy being the “chaplain to the needy.”⁴³ He made some adjustments, but tried to keep in touch with those most in need. That sensitized him and helped him keep in perspective the greater picture. He applied most of his time and energy to helping the leaders lead and the ministries thrive. He also focused a good bit on worship and preaching so that central experience of congregational life was as vibrant as possible. In Montoursville the Deacons were very helpful in sharing the load of caring for the needy.

Ollie believes, in large part, the vitality of a congregation is absolutely related to the quality of pastoral leadership. As a part of this vitality he saw vision for the direction of the congregation to be one of his key responsibilities, but not his alone. “While I had some ideas and hopes of my own, I found that vision was best discerned together ...with the Session and in conversation with peer congregations/pastors.” To communicate the vision he and the session used the development of long-range plans and “goals for the year in ministry” to help them be very specific about moving in certain directions. They also had a clear mission statement that helped them “stay on track.”

He did not see himself as the chief resource (fund) raiser for the congregation.⁴⁴ In this area he worked in cooperation with the Finance and Stewardship Committees who shared that burden with him. He did see himself as a “point person (poster child?)” for some of those financial communications, but the text and message were always “group work”. In fundraising he has learned by doing. They used an outside consulting firm for a capital funds campaign and that experience was very, very educational for Ollie, and helpful to the congregation. When asked if he is timid or bold in approaching people of

⁴³ Borden, *Hit the Bullseye*, 71.

⁴⁴ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 93.

means about giving he said he is, “somewhere in the middle.” When he is excited about the vision and the timeliness or importance of God’s work, he is bold about asking. When he asks too boldly or frequently, his wife tells him to tone it down. So, it ends up somewhat balanced.

When investing in developing future leaders he recognizes that he probably does not spend enough time, although he is heavily involved with nominating committee work and the training of new church officers. He also often “taps folks” for service on committees or duties saying “you’d be good at...” He is supportive of youth, children’s and young adult ministries and believes them (like summer camp) to very important for developing future leaders.

Those that first saw leadership in Ollie were teammates who voted him team captain in high school, a dean of Students who asked him to be on committees and saw him as a campus leader by his Junior year. The dean was one of those at the college who asked him to consider seminary.

Ollie mentors by example and sharing in ministry together. His leadership style is collegial/supportive. Through that style of leadership and mentoring, he has seen a good number of folks answer and pursue their calls...whether to ordained ministry (there have been nearly a dozen of those folks, prior to Montoursville Ollie was in campus ministry at UNC Chapel Hill) or through service in their congregation/community.

In his decision making process he seeks the Spirit’s counsel. He trusts “intuition” and his sense of things and feels those are God’s gifts working in his life. He consults trusted members, sometimes-family members (like his father) or colleagues. Past

experience is extremely helpful. The more he serves the more he has to draw upon.

Different contexts of service have also been helpful. He considers himself a risk taker.

In understanding himself and who God has called him to be Ollie feels calling and vision are the fuel that keeps him going. Character is that essential bit of who he is that he sees as central to his Christian identity. He admits to being too fearful at times, and prays for courage and strength to do what he must. Recently, in the midst of a very, very difficult situation in the church, he told a friend, “I’m trying to fight the good fight...only, I don’t have the stomach for it.” He does try to pace himself (and others) by saying “you can walk farther than you can run.” He thinks the elders in Montoursville had a pretty good assessment of who he was—both strengths and weaknesses.

As a leader he sees himself growing by assuming new responsibilities that force him to learn more about leading/supervising both paid staff and volunteer leaders. Ollie went on to say what he learned at Montoursville has really been put to use in leading the congregation he now serves with two associate pastors and a large paid staff.

He seeks to stay close to God by reading books and attending continuing education conferences. He finds the CE conferences are very helpful. Getting away so he can get some perspective on his ministry and the work and witness of the church is very important to him.

Ollie has some fairly defined disciplines that keep up his endurance and help him avoid burnout. He is zealous about keeping his day off. If he knows he has evening meetings, he will usually leave the office by 1-2pm (this author finds this departure time alarmingly early). The discipline of Bible Study and preaching prep are very instrumental in helping him stay true to his calling. So are doing the “musts” of ministry—seeing

shut-ins, hospital visits, weddings, funerals, baptisms. These practices of ministry that are a part of his job description are helpful in keeping him true to his calling. He hasn't had a hard time saying "no". He has found the response, "if you need to know immediately, the answer is no" to be very useful.

He sees the practice of developing safe relationships as essential. He has been burned in this area. "Once burned, twice shy." He tries to always be professional in pastoral relationships. Self-care helps him keep healthy boundaries. For him, the needs of family life with young kids force him to have some of that time away and boundary definitions that are needed. Recreation has always been an aspect of his boundaries and safe relationships. He has done different things over the years. Finding something that's fun and beyond the church is essential for him: at present—walking, fishing, and house repairs.

In determining his priorities he has tried to be responsive to his context: what's going on? What's needed? What were folks thinking, feeling, doing, and saying? What did he think they needed? The elders were somewhat involved in determining these priorities. Often, the details of these came out of the particular work of committees. There was generally agreement between Ollie and the elders about where they were heading and how to get there.

At times Ollie has been subversive and counter-cultural in his ministry. In every area of ministry he always tried to move "beyond where we were to where God would have us be." "What if?" "How about we try...?" "Could we...?" He challenged folks to be asking, what's next and how to be more faithful and effective in ministry? He did that across the board. He admitted he didn't like status quo too much.

He felt that using language correctly, creatively, and carefully was essential.⁴⁵

“We are a people of the word and we need to use them wisely and well.” In general Ollie is much more in tune with Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* is a book he identified as being significant in his understanding of Pastoral Leadership. He was more concerned with process than final product. For Ollie, faithfulness is more important than fruitfulness though he acknowledged they surely are related.

He prefers the “cure of souls”, but knows he has to do the running of the church.⁴⁶

He said it was “like paying your mortgage and utility bills so you have time and money to do things that are more exciting—give to the church, go to a game, get new clothes, vacation, etc.”

It is his hope, trust, and experience that God is at work before and after him. That takes a lot of pressure off of things depending on him. He shared that in seminary, they used to say, “Before you walk into that hospital room to make your visit, know that God is already there. Your job is to help folks see that.” He also saw prevenience in the Resurrection story: “Jesus has already gone ahead of the disciples and is waiting for them to catch up to where he is. That is indeed, very good news.”

Ollie occasionally preached or taught about prayer, he believes he probably did most of his teaching by example; opening and closing meetings with prayer; praying for someone in counseling or in crisis; praying in worship on the Lord’s day.

He did see folks in the Montoursville congregation growing spiritually. He has found that it is harder to detect spiritual growth taking place in a larger congregation than

⁴⁵ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 46.

⁴⁶ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 56.

in a smaller one when he was more intimately involved with the individual lives of members/friends of the church.

For him the Idolatry of the pastor is always a concern. He has tried to remember with a mental sticky note, “there is a God, and it isn’t me!” He likes how the Presbyterian Book of Order opens, “All power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ by Almighty God, who raised Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, all power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.”⁴⁷ Ollie tries to be very, very careful with whatever authority the church or God have given him. He says, “It’s for God’s glory and not ours.”

Ollie has not struggled in maintaining balance between what people expect of him and who he believes God has called him to be. The call to Montoursville was “a happy call situation.” What they expected seemed to coincide pretty closely with who he felt called to be. He suspects that if there had been a conflict in this area he would have spoken honestly and directly about his sense of call and what he believed God had called him to do.

Ollie has never had a sabbatical. He would like one (3 months) so he could pursue a topic of study with greater detail, maybe to write or use in ministry. He thinks Montoursville would have been very supportive, although funding would have been a significant challenge. He knew there would have been resistance “I don’t get a sabbatical in my work.” He has seen clergy who used a sabbatical when they were burned out,

⁴⁷ *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II Book of Order*, (Louisville, KY: The Office of the General Assembly) G-1.0100a.

often coming back to work slowly or moving on immediately after the sabbatical. He knows congregations have been burned, so he never brought it up. Still, he would like to have one within a few years.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem, as described in chapter one, is that Northumberland Presbytery is in significant decline. Congregations are shrinking in membership, worship attendance, and giving. The executive presbyter has a passion for ministry and seeks to help wherever he can, but his focus is on administrative matters and addressing crises. This author sought to address the problem by examining the leadership styles of five pastors within the presbytery.

The five pastors who participated in this project have all had long-term pastorates in congregations that would generally be considered some of the healthier and more vibrant congregations within the presbytery. By looking at these five pastors; their styles of leadership, level of accountability, and their perspectives on vision this author sought to better understand the pastoral leadership dynamics within the presbytery and how that relates to the state of the presbytery.

In chapter one this author quoted George Barna, “the individual decided to be a leader even though God did not call him or her to be one.”¹ Each of the pastors in this study had their leadership either confirmed or identified by another. For Billy Younger it was his youth pastor who identified his gifts for leadership and his father in-law who confirmed his leadership gifts. Dick Kellet could not point out an individual who first saw his leadership abilities, but Rev. Jim Brown and members of the Presbyterian Church in Upper Octorora, PA identified Dick’s call to pastoral leadership. It was a Young Life leader who saw Steve Shirk’s leadership abilities for youth ministry. Steve admits that he

¹ George Barna. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 61.

was more comfortable in that leadership role than his current one. Bob Reich's first employer saw so much leadership potential in him that he found Bob another job, one that would better utilize and develop his leadership abilities. It was Dick Kellet and the members of First Presbyterian of Northumberland that identified Bob's leadership gifts for ministry. Ollie Wagner listed a number of people who spotted his gifts for leadership, he credited a college dean with guiding him toward the pastorate. Each of these five pastors had people who identified leadership abilities in them and encouraged them to pursue the pastorate. This author does not know how many pastors in Northumberland Presbytery fit Barna's quote, but none of these five do.

The levels of accountability that the participating pastors perceived were more varied than this author anticipated. Billy felt highly accountable to the session of the congregation he served. The ruling elders played an active role in setting goals and establishing priorities. Dick's accountability evolved over the years, highly accountable early on, much less so in the later years. Steve felt a high level of accountability to his session, and seemingly was the least comfortable with it. Bob was the most comfortable with being accountable to the session. He seemed to thrive with it and this author believes would be uncomfortable without it. Ollie's feelings of accountability to the session were perhaps the most candid; knowing he needed to be accountable to them, but feeling that he needed to challenge them to hold him accountable. This author agrees with Ollie's feeling that often times elders are so deferential to the pastor that the pastor needs to remind, even challenge the elders to hold the pastor accountable. None of the five participants felt that their accountability to session was oppressive or overwhelming.

They generally appreciated the accountability and desired more of it. In their position of leadership they each seemed to feel a greater accountability to God than to the session.

In September of 2010 Billy left the Lycoming Centre congregation to receive a call in Pittsburgh Presbytery. This author has noticed how the different levels of accountability between the Lycoming Centre congregation and the Northumberland congregation, where Dick retired from in November of 2009. The Northumberland congregation has struggled since Dick's departure, and their search process is also struggling. The congregation's identity seemed to be closely connected to Dick being their pastor, their identity seems to have departed with him. The Lycoming Centre congregation has done well after Billy's departure. They seem to have a strong sense of identity that is not too tied to who their pastor was or is. Their search process seems to be ahead of Northumberland's.

Each of the five believes that the vitality of a congregation is related to the quality of the pastoral leadership. Billy identified longevity as significantly affecting both congregational vitality and pastoral leadership. For Dick the quality of the pastoral leadership and its relationship with congregational vitality was not a significant issue. Steve has seen how his level of energy affected the congregation's energy level. Bob was emphatic about this relationship and has experienced a dramatic change for the better in the vitality of the congregation since he has been leading them. Ollie tied vision in as a key component in the pastor's leadership that brings vitality. This author finds it interesting that the retired businessperson saw the greatest connection between the quality of the pastoral leadership and the vitality of the congregation. All the participants saw a relationship between pastoral leadership and congregational vitality, Bob saw it more

clearly as a cause and affect. For Bob excellence in pastoral leadership is imperative for a vital congregation. In his business career excellence in leadership was expected and necessary. He has seen the effect of his energetic leadership has had on his congregation.

What kind of vision do the pastors in this project have for their congregation? Is their vision one of maintaining what they have received or is it to significantly, perhaps even radically, grow their congregation? Is their vision something that might catch on or have an impact at another congregation within the presbytery, could it be passed on to the entire presbytery? This was something this author was hoping to find through this project, but did not.

Billy does not see himself as a visionary leader, but as a dependable pastor. This author sees Billy as a pastor with vision and thought that, of the five, Billy would be the most likely to be a visionary leader. Billy is cautious in introducing new visionary ideas. He is hopeful that his leadership inspires vision, but he sees his own leadership style as more oriented toward maintenance than visionary. It appears, even with Billy's departure, that the congregation's vision is still intact. The presbytery could learn from the leadership at Lycoming Centre about vision and direction. Billy saw himself as shepherding that vision, not creating it.

Dick saw the pastor as a visionary leader: communicating the vision through the session and preaching. He saw the pastor as integral in setting the direction for the congregation and that direction being a manifestation of the pastor's vision. This author was surprised by Dick's articulation of this, yet was not aware of his congregation having a clear or unified direction. In the decade that this author has known him, Dick has seemed to be in maintenance mode. Without Dick's leadership the congregation has

lacked vision and direction. Even in his last season of ministry it seems Dick was providing some vision.

Steve has been too busy dealing with the demands of day-to-day ministry to address the visionary aspects in his role as pastor. He knows it is a significant responsibility of the pastor, but one he has not really addressed. Based on the tone in which Steve shared these comments this author believes that the session of Steve's church was not been very receptive to some initial vision he had shared with them and this has discouraged him from sharing further vision and kept him focused on maintenance. In a follow up conversation it appears Steve has a greater sense of vision than in the past. This author believes Steve would attribute this to better health in his personal life. It seems he has more to give the congregation and a greater strength to handle negative responses.

Bob has a vision for his congregation, owns it, shares it with the session, and communicates it to the congregation. Bob and Dick were similar in how they saw the role of the pastor in relation to vision; this makes sense, since for many years Bob was an active member and served as an elder in Dick's congregation. Bob seems to be more comfortable and gifted as a visionary leader than the other four. This author believes this is due to Bob's strength of character that he was born with and has been refined in the business world. Bob has shared that in his business career there was always the threat that failure could lead to closing the business. In the church that fear isn't nearly as acute.

Ollie sees visionary leadership as being directly linked to sense of call. His sense of call fuels his vision and his vision reinforces his sense of call. This author believes

that, while at Montoursville, Ollie prepared the congregation well for future growth, and though he has left that congregation, they seem to be excited about the direction God is leading them. In a time of transition this author observed the congregation thinking beyond maintenance toward growth. It seems Ollie's vision for the congregation has transcended his time with them.

Of the five pastors in this study Bob is clearly the most gifted and comfortable in the role of visionary leader of a congregation. Though he is the least experienced in leading a congregation, he is the most experienced leader. The four seminary trained career pastors were significantly less comfortable in visionary leadership roles than the retired banker who, in retirement, has become a Commissioned Lay Pastor.

Seminary education generally does not involve training on how to run a church. The education is on theology and how to teach theology, it is not on how to run a small business. Large congregations have experienced business people on staff, running the business side of congregational ministry. Small congregations generally do not. Bob is a businessperson running a congregation. His primary experience is running a business, he is learning and teaching theology as he gains experience. Seminaries and denominations need to prepare pastors to run a small business.

Should congregations stop encouraging young people with gifts for ministry to go to seminary to become pastors and instead focus on retired people with leadership experience and vision to be the leaders of congregations? No! There is not an abundance of retired business professionals with the leadership skills and vision for ministry that Bob has. There are others with some similar gifts, but they are few, and he is exceptional. Congregations do need to identify young people with gifts for ministry and

encourage them to consider the pastorate instead of other professions. Congregations and seminaries need to training all those going into the pastorate that congregational ministry is a small business. Congregations should be encouraging members with gifts for ministry to explore ministry as a career or a second career. Second career Lay Pastors is a growing trend in Northumberland Presbytery.

All of the pastors in this study had a sense of vision, and visionary leadership, but none of them had it to the degree that it has radically grown their congregation. This author does not believe that any of these pastors have a vision for ministry that could be radically transformative to another congregation or throughout the presbytery. There are a variety of elements that factor into this. This author believes that the primary factor is that these congregations are established PC(USA) congregations with a history and are in small towns in Central Pennsylvania. There seems to be a mindset that there is a “Presbyterian way” of doing things. Even though each of the congregations within the project does many things differently, they believe they are doing it “the Presbyterian way.” The pastors participating in this project have, for the most part, adopted their congregation’s way of doing things, rather than introducing new and different ways. It has led to longevity, but not to radical growth or change. This in an area where people like Joe Paterno coaching into his mid-eighties with no thought of retiring.

Another aspect of this project was the longevity of the pastors within this project. How do these pastors work in and relate to their congregations in a way that creates an environment that enables them to have an enduring and healthy relationship with their congregations? All five participants mentioned spiritual disciplines, boundaries, and outside activities as important to their endurance. Billy said, “only by the Grace of God”,

and then mentioned humility, keeping his pride in check, the ability to say “no”, and relationships outside of the congregation. Dick also mentioned humility and put “being able to say no” in the context of realizing he wasn’t God, that everything was not dependant on him, “it was in God’s hands.” Steve’s answers to his longevity were similar, though he credited his taking up running, which is a relatively new activity for him, as playing a very significant ingredient to his longevity and building healthy relationships both inside and outside the congregation. For Bob it is the combination of his interests outside of ministry and his focus within ministry that have enabled him to endure. Ollie guards his time away from ministry responsibilities: maintaining his day off and using a flextime type of schedule.

All five participants seem to have healthy systems in place maintain healthy relationships within the congregation, and keep them from burnout. Of the five, this author believes Ollie’s guarding of his time away from the office has the greatest potential to run into difficulties. Being present and available can be important aspects in ministry; if Ollie guards his time too much, this author believes he runs the risk of being accused of being absent when “needed” or not working as hard at his job as his congregants do at theirs. People may see his boundaries as a lack of commitment to the congregation. This author believes Ollie needs to first establish a reputation as a hard worker who is responsive and available to the congregation and their needs. After that reputation has been established, then he will be better able to guard his time without congregants questioning his commitment or work ethic.

Each of the five pastors has their own vision, way of leading, and staying healthy, but there are similarities. What are these similarities? Do they point to patterns of

healthy leadership within the presbytery? Could these patterns be applied in ways that could be transformational for congregations within the presbytery?

Is there a type of leadership reflected within one or some of these five pastors that could effect significant positive change and growth within the presbytery? Sadly this author believes the answer is no. These five had/have their hands full with their responsibilities within their congregations; though each contributed to the work of the presbytery, no one had the time or energy to make a significant contribution to the presbytery that would result in reversing the trends of decline. There was nothing different in what any one of these five were doing as pastors than what pastors are supposed to be doing. Each of them identified their style of pastoral leadership much more with Eugene Peterson's *Contemplative Pastor* than with Bill Hybels' *Courageous Leadership*. As a group their pastoral leader was better than average within the presbytery. Individually some were doing better than others, but none of them were functioning in such a way that others would see it as new, innovative, or outside the box. They are simply better than average within an average presbytery. None of them had a vision that was beyond their congregation. They each had an awareness of the decline within the presbytery, but none of them had a vision for what the presbytery should be doing to change the steady decline.

This author does not believe any discoveries that could significantly change the presbytery were made in this project. Interviewing five of the leading pastors within Northumberland Presbytery this author has a greater appreciation for each of these five and how they fulfill their role as pastor, leader, and visionary: each with varying degrees of skill, experience, self-confidence, insecurity, challenges, gifts, and abilities. The

constants were a strong sense of call to their congregation, a desire to serve well, an attempt to stay healthy with an eye on longevity, and an overarching desire to serve God.

The gifts these five bring to the presbytery are varied and come from their individual gifts and experiences. They primarily learned through experience not from literature and coursework. Among these five there is not a methodology that can be taught to others through a class or seminar.

Based on this study the forecast for the Northumberland Presbytery is not a bright one, but this study is very limited, and God is not limited. The future of the presbytery is in God's hands and only God knows what the future holds for the congregations that make up Northumberland Presbytery.

APPENDIX A

Worship Attendance Records as presented in the Executive Presbyter's Report, Stated Meeting of Northumberland Presbytery, March 18, 2006.

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2005</u>
Allenwood	65	93	70	32
Arnot	20	13	15	8
Benton, First	14	14	14	12
Benton, Raven Creek	74	40	40	25
Berwick	90	80	80	70
Bloomsburg	165	125	112	120
Coundersport	47	53	44	30
Danville, Grove	150	170	160	140
Danville, Mahoning	45	35	30	29
Danville, Mooresburg	62	60	75	60
Elkland	40	42	30	30
Elysburg	125	135	135	155
Emporium	100	85	48	59
Galeton	30	40	40	36
Jersey Shore	80	75	60	62
Lewisburg	315	260	312	315
Linden	24	10	8	4
Lock Haven	80	120	117	115
Lycoming Centre	200	160	185	180
Mansfield	25	30	25	15

<u>Congregation</u>	1992	1998	2002	2005
Mifflinburg	45	20	20	20
Mill Hall	55	32	30	24
Milton	210	175	175	134
Montgomery	40	35	25	25
Montoursville	90	95	110	127
Mount Carmel	27	28	21	18
Muncy	84	88	85	45
Nelson	10	5	12	30
Northumberland	65	85	85	85
Orangeville	24	36	--	34
Osceola	12	17	14	12
Pottsgrove	70	54	25	25
Renovo	25	19	21	18
Shamokin	55	46	45	42
Sunbury, First	115	109	53	56
Sunbury, Mountain	25	35	50	58
Tioga	40	25	22	28
Watsonstown	52	55	63	61
Wellsboro	140	140	120	107
Williamsport, Bethel	45	48	48	39
Williamsport, CC	310	160	171	176
Williamsport, First	75	70	74	68

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2005</u>
Williamsport, Lycoming	130	105	80	61
Williamsport, Northway	60	40	35	35
<u>Totals</u>	<u>3,555</u>	<u>3,162</u>	<u>2,984</u>	<u>2,795</u>

Membership Records for Congregations in Northumberland Presbytery as presented in the Executive Presbyter's Report, Stated meeting of Northumberland Presbytery, March 18, 2006.

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Allenwood	63	54
Arnot	27	11
Benton	20	19
Benton, Raven Creek	54	53
Berwick	136	135
Bloomsburg	313	308
Coudersport	99	88
Danville, Grove	356	341
Danville, Mahoning	100	96
Danville, Mooresburg	107	105
Elkland	44	44
Elysburg	253	265
Emporium	85	71
Galeton	94	91
Jersey Shore	124	101
Lewisburg	527	514
Linden	16	15
Lock Haven	239	235
Lycoming Centre	178	180
Mansfield	36	35

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Mifflinburg	46	43
Mill Hall	64	64
Milton	330	330
Montgomery	54	54
Montoursville	217	233
Mount Carmel	26	24
Muncy	99	101
Nelson	20	26
Northumberland	133	131
Orangeville	64	64
Osceola	18	15
Potts Grove	61	40
Renovo	30	28
Shamokin	91	90
Sunbury, First	68	67
Sunbury, Mountain	66	70
Tioga	38	43
Watsontown	96	98
Wellsboro	350	341
Williamsport, Bethel	83	83
Williamsport, First	114	123
Williamsport, CC	373	362

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Williamsport, Lycoming	155	127
Williamsport, Northway	52	55
<hr/> Totals	<hr/> 5621	<hr/> 5459

APPENDIX B

Below are the interview questions for the participants in this thesis project. Follow up questions were based upon the participant's initial response to the questions below.

1. Do you consider yourself a good leader?
2. Who has most greatly influenced your leadership style?
3. When did you first become aware that you had leadership abilities?
4. What do you consider your top leadership responsibility these days?
5. Do you see yourself as more of a shepherd, leader, visionary?
6. How accountable do you feel to the session?
7. What did you think of the Hit the Bullseye?
 - a. The accountability aspect?
 - b. The being moved out aspect?
 - c. Do you think God is equally interested in fruitfulness as He is faithfulness?
 - d. Do you think this presbytery needs that aggressive style of leadership?
8. Which biblical leader(s) do you most identify with?
 - a. Why?
 - b. Attributes, characteristics
9. Do you find yourself spending a disproportionate amount of time and energy being the "chaplain to the needy", rather than equipping lay leaders and leading the congregation?
10. Do you believe the vitality of a congregation is related to the quality of pastoral leadership?

11. Do you see vision for the direction of the congregation to be one of your key roles/responsibilities?
12. How do you communicate your vision?
13. Do you see yourself as the chief resource (fund) raiser for your congregation?
14. Do you feel adequately prepared to be a fundraiser?
15. Are you timid or bold in approaching people of means about giving?
 - a. Giving in general
 - b. Giving to a specific vision or project?
16. How much have you/do you invest in developing future leaders?
17. Who saw leadership potential in you and how did they mentor you?
18. Tell me about how you mentor?
 - a. Where are some of your disciples today?
19. What is your leadership style (see pg 10)?
20. What enters into your decision making process?
 - a. How much do you rely upon the Holy Spirit?
 - b. Whom do you consult?
 - c. How much of a factor is past experience?
 - d. Do you see yourself as a risk taker?
21. How are you at managing yourself?
 - a. Calling
 - b. Vision
 - c. Passion
 - d. Utilization of Spiritual gifts

e. character

f. pride

g. fear pace

22. How do you think your elders see you doing in managing yourself in these areas?

23. How are you growing as a leader?

24. How do you stay close to God (pg 13 relational, intellectual, serving, contemplative, activist, creation, worship)?

25. How do you endure?

a. Avoid burnout

b. Stay true to your calling

c. Learn how to say no

d. Develop safe relationships

e. Participate in recreation

26. Do you see yourself more as a visionary leader or dependable pastor?

27. How do you determine your boundaries and priorities?

a. How involved are your elders this determination?

b. How do they feel about your boundaries and priorities?

28. Eugene Peterson uses the word “subversive” to describe how pastors are to be counter-cultural, do you see yourself as subversive/ counter-cultural?

a. Are you trying to do a better job of what the church already does, or introduce “another world”?

29. How do you pray with people?

- a. Do you do the praying for the people or lead them to the hard work of prayer?
- 30. How important is it for you to use language correctly, creatively, carefully?
- 31. Peterson is big into patience: he is into worshipping God, dealing with evil, and developing faithfulness. Hybels and Bordon are more into results: where are you on the spectrum?
- 32. How do you balance the running of the church and “the cure of souls”?
- 33. How much of a factor is prevenience (God’s already at work) in your style of ministry?
 - a. Do you see your role in ministry as more active, passive, or middle voice?
- 34. How much do you preach/teach on prayer?
 - a. The language of relationship with God?
- 35. How do you see the people within your congregation growing?
 - a. How do you combat the idolatry of the pastor?
- 36. How do you maintain a balance between what the people expect of you and who you believe God has called you to be?
- 37. Sabbatical: ever had one? Desire one? What would your elders think of the idea? Your laity?

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VITA

James Clements King was born in Toronto Canada on April 4, 1961. When Jim was a year old his family moved to the Bay Area in Northern California. He grew up in Walnut Creek, CA. Jim graduated from Northgate High School in June of 1980. He attended Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA, where he graduated with a BA in Economics in May of 1984. Jim attended Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, he graduated with an M.Div. in 1992.

From April 1993 through January 2001 Jim was the Associate Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, NJ. In February of 1995 he was introduced to Miss Pauline Lipps. They were wed in December of 1995. Jim and Pauline have a daughter, Elizabeth Hope, and a son, Andrew James.

In February of 2001 Jim became the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg PA.

In 2004 Jim entered into the Pastoral Skills for the Twenty-first Century track of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. He anticipates graduating in May of 2011.